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THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 4 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND *12 PAGES OF EDUCATION TIMES (*CITY AREAS ONLY)

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Former manager **Jose Mourinho moving closer to taking charge at Real Madrid a second time.** Says his agent is in touch with the club over a potential return, but he is still to make a decision

Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho seems to be moving closer to becoming Real Madrid coach for the second time in his career as he admits the club has been in contact with his rep Jorge Mendes

World Health Organization declares Ebola disease outbreak caused by a rare virus in Congo and neighbouring Uganda a public health emergency of international concern, after more than 300 suspected cases and 88 deaths

Wes Streeting, in his first public appearance since resigning as Britain's health secretary last week, **announces he will take part in any leadership contest to replace Keir Starmer and calls for Britain to rejoin the European Union**

B'luru road rage: 2 held for hitting architect, hubby

Two men from Doddaballapur Rural have been arrested for allegedly attacking an architect and her husband in a road rage incident. On Friday, "when I honked, a man from the MUV came near my window and clicked my photo on his mobile phone," the woman told cops. They he and another man threatened to break the glass, and when her husband confronted them, they tried to kill him with a stone, she alleged. P 3

Prudential to buy 75% stake in Bharti Life

UK's Prudential plc has doubled down on its India plans, agreeing to acquire a 75% stake in Bharti Life Insurance from Bharti Life Ventures and 360 ONE Asset Management for an initial cash consideration of Rs 3,500 crore. The deal comes less than six months after govt amended laws allowing 100% investment in insurance allowing full foreign control. P 15

Three decades on, B'luru-Mumbai route gets 2nd train

Ending a three-decade wait, Indian Railways will now operate a second direct train connecting Mumbai and Bengaluru. It will originate from SMVT at 8:35pm Saturdays and Tuesdays and reach Mumbai at 8:40pm the next day. The return service from Mumbai will start at 11:15pm Sundays and Wednesdays and reach Bengaluru by 10:30pm. P 5

What NEET Retest Is Doing To The Young

Students across the country are not just dealing with deep anxiety, burnout, exhaustion and fear. They are losing faith in the examination system itself. **TOI** investigates, P 10

India readies 1st privately built military aircraft

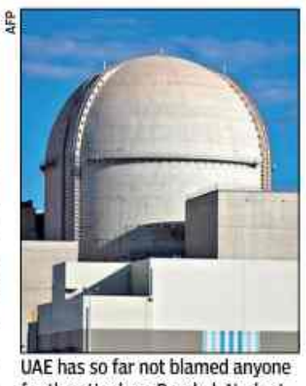
India's first domestically assembled C-295 military transport aircraft is ready for flight testing at Tata-Airbus's Vadodara facility. Built under a Rs 21,935cr deal for 56 aircraft, 40 will be made in India. The project boosts indigenous defence manufacturing, replacing IAF's Avro-748 fleet with versatile tactical transport aircraft. P 6

Four Ugandan women escape from city ashram

Four Ugandan women, detained at a private ashram in Bengaluru's Kothanur owing to a lack of space in the detention centre, escaped after breaking the window grills, police said. The women, detained on charges of drug peddling and illegal stay, among others, escaped in the early hours of May 11. P 2

Drone attack sparks fire at UAE nuclear plant

Strike On 1st N-Plant Of Arab World A Blow To Iran Truce



AFP

UAE has so far not blamed anyone for the attack on Barakah N-plant

Dubai: A drone strike caused a fire at a nuclear power plant in the United Arab Emirates, officials in Abu Dhabi said on Sunday, at a time when progress appears to have stalled on efforts to end the US-Israeli war with Iran and restart shipping in the Gulf.

Emirati officials said they were probing the source of the strike and that the UAE had the full right to respond to such "terrorist attacks". The UAE has previously accused Iran of attacking its energy targets in what it has called an escalation of the conflict in the region.

The drone hit an electrical generator outside the inner perimeter of the Barakah nuclear power plant, the Abu Dhabi media office said. Radiological safety levels were unaffected and there were no injuries, it said. International Atomic Energy Agency said emergency diesel generators were providing power to the plant's "unit 3", and called for "maximum military restraint" near any nuclear power plant, adding that it was following the situation closely. Barakah is the first and the only nuclear power station in the Arab world.

The UAE defence ministry said two other drones had been "successfully" dealt with, and that the drones had been launched from the "western border". It didn't elaborate. The UAE "condemned in the strongest terms the unprovoked terrorist attack", a foreign ministry statement said. AGENCIES

▶AT UN, INDIA FLAGS CONCERNS OVER ATTACKS ON SHIPS, P 11

▶'Threat to security', P 16

Delhi CNG price hiked second time in 3 days

Indraprastha Gas Ltd has increased the price of CNG for the second time in three days, a move that may push up freight and passenger fares in Delhi. The price of CNG in the capital increased by Re 1 per kg, from Rs 88.09 to Rs 89.09, on Sunday. IGL had earlier raised retail CNG prices by Rs 2 per kg on May 15. It is now priced at Rs 88.70 per kg in Noida and Ghaziabad, and Rs 85.12 per kg in Gurgaon. P 6

Indian killed, 3 injured in drone strike in Moscow region

Moscow/New Delhi: An Indian worker was killed and three others were injured in a drone attack in the Moscow region, the Indian embassy in Russia said Sunday.

Russian media reported that three people were killed and another six suffered injuries in the Moscow region in the Ukrainian drone attack on Saturday night. It did not identify the nationalities of the deceased. Ukraine carried out overnight attacks targeting several installations in the Moscow region. "...Embassy officials have visited the location and met the injured workers in the hospital," the Indian embassy in Russia said on X.

"The Embassy condoles the loss of life and is working with the company management and local authorities to provide necessary assistance to the workers," it said. AGENCIES

▶Oil refinery targeted, P16

RCB BEAT PUNJAB, QUALIFY FOR PLAYOFFS

Photos: ANI & PTI

RCB's Rasikh Salam and Virat Kohli celebrate Punjab Kings skipper Shreyas Iyer's dismissal in Dharamsala on Sunday. The defending champions, who defeated the hosts by 23 runs, became the first team to qualify for IPL 2026 playoffs. In-form Kohli's 37-ball 58 and Venkatesh Iyer's (top right) unbeaten 73 from 40 deliveries helped the defending champions post 222/4. Bhuvneshwar Kumar took two wickets and Rasikh claimed three to restrict Punjab to 199/8 despite a late charge by middle-order batters, Marcus Stoinis and Shashank Singh | REPORT ON P 17

6th Straight defeat for Punjab

67th IPL half-century for Kohli

Boost for tech, trade, defence as India, Sweden become 'strategic partners'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Swedish Crown Princess Victoria conferred the nation's highest honour, Royal Order of Polar Star, on PM Modi Sunday

India and Sweden upgraded their relationship to a strategic partnership, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Ulf Kristersson endorsing an upgraded joint action plan (2026–2030) that cuts across green transition, emerging technology, trade, security and defence, climate action, and economic frameworks.

Addressing a European roundtable, also attended by EU chief Ursula von der Leyen, Modi said India and Sweden are connected by shared values of democracy, transparency, innovation and sustainability, which provide foundation for an ambitious and forward-looking economic partnership.

"We consider innovation to be the medium of development... sustainability to be our responsibility. And we consider democracy to be our strength," said the PM.

Underlining the significance of political, economic and strategic convergence between India and Europe for peace and stability around the world, Modi said in today's tense global situation, close cooperation between democracies like India and Sweden is of paramount importance.

PM's Holland visit yields 17 outcomes

PM's visit to the Netherlands ended Sunday with 17 outcomes in all, including pacts on migration and mobility, green hydrogen and defence cooperation. Modi and Dutch PM Rob Jetten discussed West Asia, calling for freedom of navigation and flow of commerce through Hormuz. P 11

"India has always relied on dialogue and diplomacy to resolve various tensions and problems. India and Sweden agree that terrorism is a serious challenge for the entire humanity," said the PM, while thanking the Swedish PM for expressing solidarity with India after the Pahalgam terrorist attack.

▶Oldest honour, P 11

Study: Kharif output dips in many states in El Niño yrs

A study by ICAR scientists found that El Niño years significantly reduce kharif crop output across many Indian districts. Analysing 2002, 2004 and 2009, researchers reported paddy yields fell by over 10% in 77 districts and maize in 65 districts. Sorghum and pearl millet also saw similar declines in 36 districts each. Major paddy impacts were recorded in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha. The study urges district-level climate-resilient planning, drought-tolerant seeds, better water management and weather-based advisories to limit losses. P 6

▶Heavy rainfall alert issued for Kerala, P 6

One in three cybercrimes in K'taka is an investment scam, shows data

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Bengaluru: The message often arrives dressed as opportunity. A 'financial adviser' offering stock tips on WhatsApp. A woman on a matrimonial site suggesting cryptocurrency investments. A social media advertisement promising quick profits through trading apps. For thousands across Karnataka, the pitch ends the same way: Drained bank accounts and vanished scammers.

Investment frauds have emerged as one of the fastest-growing cybercrimes in the state, now accounting for nearly one in every three cyber offences reported in the first four months of 2026.

According to state police data, Karnataka recorded 4,040 cybercrime cases between Jan and April this year. Of which, 1,324 cases were linked to investment scams. Trading and share trading frauds alone accounted for 956 cases, while another 368 involved fake part-time jobs, task-review schemes and similar traps.

Police say the frauds have become more organised, persuasive and widespread than ever before. "These days, the miscreants indulging in investment frauds can be seen on platforms like matrimonial sites and websites related to astrology and numerology. They upload links promising handsome returns to investors," a senior officer attached to a cybercrime police station said.

What worries investigators is the speed at which these crimes have grown.

▶Techies targeted, P 3

STATE SAW JUST 19 CASES IN 2023

- Karnataka recorded **4,040 cybercrime cases in 4 months; 1,324 were investment frauds**
- **Share trading scams were the biggest** category with 956 cases
- 368 cases involved **fake part-time jobs and task-review schemes**
- Fraudsters **target victims through WhatsApp**, social media, matrimonial sites and trading apps
- Scammers lure people with **promises of quick profits and guaranteed returns**
- **IT professionals and online investors** are among the most **common targets**
- **Investment fraud cases jumped from just 19 cases in 2023** to 6,153 cases in 2025

Fire in two coaches of Tvm-Del Rajdhani, narrow escape for 68

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Pravin Barnale

An AC passenger coach and a luggage compartment were gutted

Indore: Sixty-eight passengers escaped a major rail disaster early Sunday after flames engulfed two coaches of Trivandrum-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express in western Madhya Pradesh and an onboard fire-detection system automatically slammed brakes, stopping the train before flames could rip through the rake.

Fire broke out at 5.08am near the toilet area of B-1 coach of Train 12431 between Luni Richha and Vikramgarh Alot stations on New Delhi-Mumbai route in Ratlam district — about 140km north of Indore — under Kota division of West Central Railway.

Within moments, smoke & flames spread from B-1 coach towards adjoining luggage van. Ratlam divisional railway manager Ashwani Kumar said the fire and smoke detection system sensed thermal changes and automatically dropped brake pipe pressure, triggering emergency halt.

Train manager Upendra Kumar, along with the driver, ticket-checking staff and RPF personnel, evacuated all 68 passengers from the affected coach within 15 minutes.

▶Many reject ex gratia, P 6

PIO gets 14-yr jail for abusing 61 women in Aus

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: An Australian court has sentenced an unqualified Indian-origin massage therapist in Adelaide to 13 years and 10 months of jail for sexually abusing 61 women over 9 months, constituting 97 charges of "aggravated indecent assault" and "secretly filming" the survivors.

Judge Carmen Matteo of district court of South Australia held 39-year-old Sumit Rastogi guilty of "offending conduct" from Oct 2021 until his arrest in July 2022, and said he showed no remorse. He will be eligible for parole only in 2035.

▶Guj-origin techie held in US child abuse sting, P 16

▶'Breach of trust', P 16

Satheesan unveils Kerala cabinet, rival Chennithala gets home

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Thiruvananthapuram: Balancing demands from allies and contenders within, chief minister-designate V D Satheesan unveiled a list of 21 cabinet members Sunday including veteran Congressman Ramesh Chennithala as home minister and supporters of rival K C Venugopal for other key portfolios alongside nine representatives from IUML and other smaller parties.

Chennithala is set to emerge as the second most influential figure in the Satheesan govt holding the crucial Home and Vigilance portfolios after initial reluctance over joining the ministry.

Of the 21-member cabinet, 14 are first time ministers which includes the CM. The Congress has 11 ministerial berths apart from the CM, while IUML will have five. Remaining positions have been allocated to allies Kerala Congress (Joseph), RSP, CMP and Kerala Congress (Jacob), with one minister each.

▶KC key power, P 8

ALLIES GET 9 BERTHS

- CM-deisgnate Satheesan finalises **21 Cabinet ministers**
- **14** of them are **first-time ministers**
- **Congress gets 11** berths; **IUML & other allies get 9**
- **K C Venugopal's supporters will get other key portfolios** in the Kerala Cabinet

T'kuru girl killed over her groom choice; dad held

Tumakuru: Nearly a month after a 17-year-old girl and her father went missing a week apart, Tumakuru police have solved the case. The 48-year-old man killed his daughter over her choice of groom, and went underground to stay off police radar, **reports Rajiv Kalkod.**

Timmarayappa is a farmer from Nimbemaradahalli of Sira taluk. His daughter T Meghana fell in love with an electrician, a close relative of her mother Nirmala. While Nirmala supported the alliance, Timmarayappa was against it.

On April 16, Timmarayappa asked Meghana to come to their family farm. An argument broke out about her friendship. In a fit of rage, he strangled the girl.

▶Buries minor girl, P 3

Fossil-fuelled growth: India home to over 35% of world's 'dirtier & richer' cities

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Bengaluru: India may have taken the term "filthy rich" literally. Indian cities' growth remains tied to polluting fossil-fuel use and consequent pollution while China and several other countries have pulled ahead on cleaner urbanisation, according to a study in Nature Cities in which researchers analysed 5,435 cities worldwide between 2019 and 2024 using satellite-based nitrogen dioxide data and GDP estimates.

Of the 390 cities globally classified as 'dirtier and richer', where economic growth coincided with rising pollution, 138, or nearly 35.4%, were in India. While metros such as Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata showed cleaner growth trends, the study says many Indian urban centres continue to depend heavily on fossil fuel-intensive transport, industries and electricity generation.

As part of the study, the researchers used satellite observations of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), a pollutant strongly associated with fossil fuel combustion from transport, industries and thermal power generation, and paired the data with city-level GDP estimates to classify urban centres into four categories: 'cleaner and richer', 'dirtier and richer', 'cleaner and poorer', and 'dirtier and poorer'.

Globally, around 80% of cities with significant trends fell into the "cleaner and richer" category, where economies expanded while NO_2 pollution declined. Major metropolitan regions across East Asia, Western Europe and North America showed varying degrees of success in decoupling economic growth from fossil fuel-linked pollution.

▶India also dominated, P 6

NASHIK IN TOP 10 'DIRTIER & RICHER'

- Study **analysed 5,435 cities** with over 1 lakh population
- 80% were 'cleaner and richer' and **16% were 'dirtier and richer'**
- **15% of Indian cities had rising nitrogen dioxide pollution** from 2019-2024
- **Delhi, Mumbai** and Kolkata feature among **'cleaner and richer'** cities
- **China led the 'cleaner and richer'** category with 719 cities
- **Nashik** appears in the study's **top 10 'dirtier and richer' cities**

The study says many Indian urban centres continue to depend heavily on fossil fuel-intensive transport, industries and electricity generation

Bank has no authority to freeze a/cs over internal dispute: HC

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Bengaluru: A bank, being a custodian of funds, cannot assume the role of an adjudicating authority and proceed to freeze accounts merely on the basis of disputes between rival factions, more so when the very entitlement of the complainants to raise such dispute is under challenge.

Karnataka high court made the observation while holding the action of Canara Bank in debit-freezing eight savings bank accounts and five fixed deposit (FD) accounts of the petitioner, Sri Venkataramana Swamy Vidyavardhaka Sangha, Bantwal, Dakshina Kannada district, an educational society, as without authority of law.

The petitioner society claimed the accounts were placed under debit freeze following complaints by certain individuals, whose membership itself was under a cloud.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum noted that in earlier proceedings, the high court itself issued a directive to the deputy registrar of societies to determine the status of the complainants as members of the society, and the same was yet to be decided.

The action of the respondent bank, solely on the basis of complaints lodged by persons whose very status was under serious challenge, was premature and without legal authority.

Such coercive action could not be resorted to in a casual or mechanical manner, the judge observed.

▶Drastic step: Court, P 4

'FREEZE PREMATURE'

- HC says **banks are custodians of funds,** not adjudicating authority
- Canara Bank had **frozen 8 savings and 5 fixed deposit accounts** of petitioner
- HC rules the freeze was **premature and without legal authority**
- Accounts **can be frozen only on orders from a court or probe agency**
- **Petitioner may operate a/cs** subject to enquiry outcome

Bangalore Times

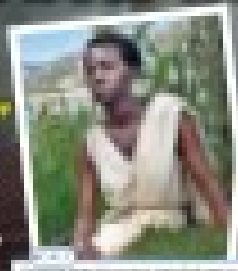
Kiara Advani on the Bombay Times Lounge

I'm not jealous of Vijay's win; I'm only pleasantly surprised and happy, says Rajinikanth

Buzzstop

JOHN SHOULD BE THE NEXT BOND: SHEKHAR KAPUR

What's Musk's beef with Nolan?



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BEST OF OORU

BRUCE LEE MANI

Bruce is the founding member and front man of rock band 'Thermal And A Quarter' (TAAQ). With his fluid jazz-fusion style and sharp songwriting, this Bengalurean has defined the sound of Indian Rock for nearly three decades

Which is your favourite venue to perform in Bengaluru? And why?

Bflat used to be it! And the new Humming Tree. Great to have focused venues like that set up. Also The Blue Room, Sabha, Windmills Craftworks... When a venue is owned or operated by people serious about the music first, it shows up in everything. Facilities and gear are one thing — intent, attitude and consistency is another. And that's why venues that get the latter right are higher in our estimation. My last performance at THT was as a guest with Raghu Dixit — and it was good fun.

What makes Bengaluru nostalgic for you?

It's been my home for my whole life! I've seen it transform from a sleepy little city to the megapolis that it is today. But, as an old Bangalorean, I'm still (perhaps very biased) surprised by how 'small' it can still feel — when you meet someone new, for example. There's a sense of connection with other Bengalureans. Bengaluru is 'small' in the sense that it still mostly feels like you get to know people quickly — there are common connections, shared interests in food or culture that help you connect.

Which is your favourite spot in the city to hang out? Share some anecdotes associated with the place.

With the city being what it is, my favourite spot to hang out currently is — my home! I'm kind of boring that way. Read, play or create music, watch movies, spend time with fam!

TAKING TENNIS beyond B'luru limits

Over two decades after Tumakuru first hosted international tennis, the city has returned to the global circuit with an ITF W35 tournament. It mirrors Karnataka's renewed zest to take the sport beyond Bengaluru and into smaller towns

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It's just past 10am on a weekday. The summer sun is already pressing hard on the Tumakuru District Tennis Stadium (TDTS). But the courts are alive with the sound of tennis balls being struck. Players stretch for serves and get down low for returns, cracking through the heat, refusing to yield to the day.

Beyond the baseline, the venue itself seems to be in motion. Workers put the finishing touches on a rock garden, a newly added gymnasium is taking shape, and a modest clubhouse is being reworked into a players' lounge, each upgrade signalling a greater ambition taking root in the system.

Set within the sprawling Tumkur University campus in Kuvempunagar, the refurbished, floodlit tennis facility now boasts of three all-weather courts, bordered by a spectator gallery with seating for 800. A practice court sits alongside the main complex.

SMK & A GRAND VISION

The International Tennis Federation's W35 event in Tumakuru in early May marked the TDTS' return to the circuit after a gap of 23 years.

The Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association's (KSLTA) goal to take tennis to the districts and reel local communities into the sport is renewed with every week of competition at these venues. When the visionary duo of late Karnataka chief minister S M Krishna and Sunder Raju took charge of the KSLTA at the turn of the millennium, one of their aims was to take tennis beyond Bengaluru and into the state's tier-two cities.

It started in Kalaburagi in the early 2000s, and then in Tumakuru, Chikkamagaluru and Davanagere, recalls Sunil Yajaman, joint-secretary of both the KSLTA and the All India Tennis Association. "Now we have tennis in some 11 districts."

> Under (SM) Krishna's leadership, tennis went to so many districts in Karnataka. I was one of those players who went to all these districts, played tennis there and enjoyed the atmosphere of playing in front of spectators who were enthusiastic about the sport
>
> **Rohan Bopanna** | FORMER DOUBLES WORLD NO.1

Tumakuru District Tennis Stadium's debut on international tennis was in 2003, when it hosted an ATP Challenger featuring Indian stars Somdev Devvarman and Rohan Bopanna. The just concluded W35 may be a smaller event in comparison, but it carries a larger message as it marks Tumakuru's return to the global tennis map.

TUMAKURU RETURNS TO CIRCUIT

Fourteen years ago, the stadium fell silent, undone as much by a protracted land dispute with the university as by years of neglect that saw player numbers dwindle and tournaments fade.

Arun Kumar, now head coach at the TDTS, keenly takes in the action in the middle. He was just 13 when the ATP Challenger came to town. When the stadium shut in 2014, he was forced to pack up and look at a different city. With few opportunities in the districts, he moved to Bengaluru to hone his coaching skills.

Late last year, a revival of the stadium was set in motion. G Parameshwara, Karnataka's home minister, once a top-notch athlete himself and a Tumakuru native, gave the go-ahead. Deputy commissioner and district magistrate Subha Kalyan, IAS, moved quickly to get the stadium up and running.

Arun Kumar, who returned to work in his hometown last Nov, now trains 85 players across age groups, including a growing 30-plus cohort. He has the support of two assistant coaches. Physical conditioning is overseen by marathoner KG Balaji.

The inclusion of older players is perhaps done with the hope of stirring a ripple effect, that they would one day bring their children along to these sessions, seeding the next generation of players, and to demonstrate to people that you can start the sport at any age.

Subha has already set her sights on an indoor facility, arguing that the stadium needs a roof to withstand the region's unpredictable weather. "It was too little time for us to complete an indoor stadium because we wanted to get the courts ready in time for the tournament, which the KSLTA helped us get in short notice. An indoor stadium is our long-term goal," says Subha.

Bopanna, the former doubles World No.1, is particularly grateful to the Krishna-Raju duo for taking tennis to small towns. "Under Krishna's leadership, tennis went to so many districts in Karnataka," he says. "I was one of those players who went to all these districts."

KSLTA LOOKS TO EXPAND

Yajaman, who visited Tumakuru in 2004 to conduct an ITF coaches course, says KSLTA's next target is another 10 districts which they hope to cover in the next couple of years. He believes that taking international tournaments beyond the big cities is a win-win for everyone. "Local administrations get to showcase their region as healthy, sports-loving places. Players can travel on smaller budgets and compete before packed stadiums," he explains.

From a business perspective, building these facilities benefits local enterprise, he says. Karnataka is the only state in India to take tennis to as many as ten tier-two cities. Besides the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium in Bengaluru's green lung Cubbon Park, Mysuru, Tumakuru, Davanagere, Dharwad, Udupi, Ballari, Kalaburagi, Bidar, Belagavi and Mandya have all hosted international tournaments.

The KSLTA's challenge, however, at some of these tier-two centres is sustainability — venues host one-off tournaments, and after the initial enthusiasm, courts slip into neglect. To counter this, they are pushing venues to stage at least one ITF men's or women's event annually, which is then supplemented by AITA junior and men's and women's tournaments, creating a 10-week calendar that keeps the facility active.

Yajaman said the state body is eyeing Kalaburagi for deeper outreach. "We want to set up a regional residential centre there for 40-50 children in the 10 to 14 age group. We hope to get it off the ground by the end of the year."

If the KSLTA's push into the districts is about widening the base of the sport, its real impact will be measured not in immediate champions but in access to courts, in rackets that find new hands, and in ambition that no longer feels geographically limited.

BASELINE SHIFT: A TIMELINE

Tier-two host cities	Int'l events so far	Last tournament & total prize money
Kalaburagi	**8**	**2026 (Women's $35K)**
Mysuru	5	2024 (M $15K)
Mandya	**4**	**2024 (M $25K)**
Dharwad	3	2023 (M $25K)
Davanagere	**3**	**2023 (Men's $15K)**
Tumakuru	2	2026 (W $35K)
Belagavi	**2**	**2012 (M $10K)**
Bidar	1	2012 (W $10K)
Udupi/Manipal	**1**	**2011 (M $10K)**
Ballari	1	2007 (M $15K)
C'magaluru	**1**	**2006 (M $25K Challenger)**

When traffic met chaos & the city got its 1st one-way

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Bengaluru had been a trading hub since the early 19th century and, in fact, the city's hustle and bustle dates back to those days. Commercial areas such as Chickpet, Gandhinagar and Malleswaram drew people from across the city and surrounding towns.

These areas were also the earliest to see traffic hurdles. In a bid to tackle road congestion, one-ways were introduced along busy stretches in the city. One such busy stretch was Subedar Chatram Road, which became Bengaluru's first one-way.

Malleswaram had emerged as a residential hub in the 1960s. Traffic movement between the area and the central bus stand was quite high. It is then that police decided to convert Subedar Chatram Road into a one-way, with traffic moving from Anand Rao Circle towards KG Circle.

STREET VIEW

After the one-way was introduced in 1965, those heading towards Malleswaram had to take Dhanvanthri Road next to the central bus stand.

The one-way helped reduce congestion on the stretch and also inspired police to look at one-ways as a preferred way to manage traffic. In the 1970s, Sampige Road and Margosa Road became one-ways and have remained so.

Like several roads in Bengaluru, Subedar Chatram Road has an interesting story about how it got its name. Subedar is a rank in the army. Legend has it that a subedar had built a rest house (called 'chatram' in Tamil and Telugu) for travellers, on the stretch, and later donated it to the govt. Apparently, in this gentleman's honour, the path was named Subedar Chatram Road.

One of the notable landmarks on SC Road is the Annamma Temple. It was built in the 15th century on the banks of the Dharmambudi lake.

The lake dried up in the early 20th century. Later, the ground was used to conduct public meetings during the freedom struggle. This meeting ground eventually made way for the central bus stand, popularly known as Majestic.

Before multiplexes mushroomed across the city, Gandhi Nagar was the movie theatre hub. While KG road had most of them, Subedar Chatram Road also had a few, including Kapali, Movieland, Anupama and Triveni. Kapali is said to have had the biggest screen among all Bengaluru theatres.

TIMES CITY

Man calls fake call centre, loses ₹2.4 lakh

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A manager of a private commercial bank in Channapatna, Bengaluru South, fell prey to cybercriminals who siphoned off Rs 2.4 lakh from his account.

The victim, 32, told police that on the morning of May 6, he booked a resort in Sakaleshpur by paying Rs 19,000 through Agoda (a digital travel platform and online travel agency). The same evening, he cancelled the booking for a personal reason.

#DontGetScammed
Gift TOI to your loved ones and protect them from scams. Call 85 95 124 124

In order to get his money back, he searched online for the Agoda customer care number. "I found the number 8000501620 and called. A person confirmed it was Agoda's call centre number and promised to refund my money. He sent me an APK file, asking me to click on the link and fill details like my name, date of birth. I did so and then he asked me to share my UPI PIN, which I refused," the complainant said.

On May 10 at 7.57am, Rs 99,865 was deducted from his bank account. At 8.14am, Rs 42,181 was siphoned off, and then Rs 48,025 at 8.16am, Rs 49,863 at 8.19am, and Rs 8,102 at 8.20am. In all, the miscreants transferred Rs 2,48,036 from my account," he said.

"We request people to double-check the contact numbers they find online," a senior police officer said.

4 detained Ugandan women break window grills, escape

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Four Ugandan women, detained in a private ashram at Kothanur owing to a lack of space in the detention centre, escaped after breaking the window grills, police said.

Topista, Nagawa, Safinah, and Fitina had been arrested from Hennur, Puttenahalli, and Parappana Agrahara police station limits a few months ago on various charges, including drug peddling and illegal stay.

"Due to lack of space at the detention centre and state women's home, they were placed in a private ashram at Doddagubbi in Kothanur. They were locked in a room located on the second floor of the ashram," an investigating officer said. After breaking the window grills, they got down to the ground and escaped in the early morning on May 11, the officer said.

Relief eludes Kogilu families 5 months after demolition

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Nearly five months after the demolition of 200 or so houses in Waseem Layout and Fakir Colony in Yelahanka's Kogilu, residents are yet to receive relief from the authorities. As the Siddaramaiah govt prepares to mark three years in office, evicted families plan to hold an indefinite 'day-and-night' protest at Freedom Park starting Monday.

The Kogilu Slum Nivasigala Horata Samiti, leading the protest, said it has support from organisations working for Dalits, farmers, and workers. Nandini K, member

STIR@FREEDOM PARK

of Dudiyuva Janara Vedike, said repeated meetings with MLA and minister Krishna Byre Gowda have made no difference. "Even though housing minister Zameer Ahmed Khan ordered surveys and directed the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation Ltd (RGHCL) to identify eligible residents for alternative housing, many residents here lack the six documents mandated by RGHCL. To get these documents, they require school leaving certificates, which many here do not possess," she said.

Residents were asked to produce several documents such as caste and income certificates, ration card, voter ID, and residence certificate.

At the site, residents have set up tents and temporary huts offering little protection from harsh weather. Kaliammal Sudha, a resident of Fakir Colony, said she has been living there for five years. "All these years, we were preoccupied with work. We had nobody to guide us on making use of free sites and houses provided to the poor. Many families we know have availed of such benefits in Hegde Nagar and other places," she said, adding that she moved there after her family sold their house near Tannery Road. According to her, residents are now forced to relieve themselves in the open after their pit latrines were demolished.

TOI

FORGOTTEN? Evicted residents of Kogilu, many of whom are living in tents, have alleged govt apathy when it comes to their rehabilitation

> My family now lives in a rented house opposite our demolished home. With the increase in gas prices, earning a living and paying rent at the same time have become even more difficult
>
> **Roshan** | AUTO DRIVER

Mohammed Fayaz, a driver now unable to work after a leg injury, said, "We are ready to leave this place if the govt gives us alternative housing. Our homes were demolished without notice." He added that officials even prevented NGOs from distributing relief such as food.

Residents also recalled that leaders across party lines visiting before the elections, but said Gowda has not visited since the demolition.

Ex-Kerala CM's post & political outrage

The demolition was carried out early on Dec 20, 2025, without notice. The district administration, along with Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) officials, conducted the drive with police protection. On Dec 21, hundreds protested outside Gowda's residence near Sahakar nagar.

On Dec 26, the then Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan posted on X, calling the developments a "brutal normalisation of bulldozer raj," drawing global attention. Former Kerala MLA KT Jaleel later visited the site. The issue became a political flashpoint between the Congress, CPI(M), and BJP.

Zameer visited the site on Dec 28 and promised action before the New Year. A three-day survey by RGHCL and Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) followed. While 12 families were allotted homes, residents claimed these were for applications submitted before the demolition. Activists said they have met Gowda three times since, without resolution.

BSWML processing facility

BSWML plans to establish a solid waste processing facility on the five-acre site. The project includes a biomethanation plant, animal rendering and incineration units, and processing plants for sanitary and coconut waste. The biomethanation plant, with a capacity of 50 tonnes, is expected to generate 4–8 tonnes of biogas per 100 tonnes of organic waste, and will be operated and maintained for 15 years.

Additionally, four one-tonne animal incineration and rendering units will be set up with a five-year maintenance agreement. A domestic sanitary waste processing unit, in two packages of five-tonne and 10-tonne capacity, will also be established, with a five-year maintenance period extendable by two years, according to BSWML.

JP NAGAR JIVES TO music & movement

Pics: Syed Asif

Vindhya.Pabolu
@timesofindia.com

Residents of JP Nagar had an energetic start to their Sunday through Happy Streets by **The Times of India**. Panduranga Nagar near Adarsh Rhythm Apartments saw locals step out in good numbers, enjoying a traffic-free stretch filled with fitness, music, and a warm sense of community.

The morning had something for everyone. Heartfulness opened the day with a yoga session that drew residents looking for a calm, grounded start to their weekend. Adding a local flavour, Panduranga Nagar Association and Step Nation kept the energy flowing with three cheerful performances — a women's group dance, a kids' group dance, and a soulful veena instrumental by residents, giving a classical touch.

BRIGHT START: JP Nagar residents turned out in large numbers for **TOI**'s Happy Streets, enjoying a lively Sunday morning of yoga, dance, music, art and community activities

BHIMA presents HAPPY streets — OUR ROADS. OUR WAY.

Swingers Dance Inc. got the crowd on their feet with a zumba session, while Let's Move Dance Academy and Kalanandana School of Dance added more colour to the morning with their own dance performances. Mic & Melody and From Mug to Mic brought live music and interactive singing to the street, making sure there was no shortage of entertainment for music lovers.

Art found its place too. NeeRav Arts Village ran art classes, while Prashree Art drew a steady stream of curious visitors with mandala art, and Retrovarna School of Arts set up drawing classes that welcomed both kids and elders in a quiet corner of creativity that many seemed happy to linger in.

My India Quest ran a lively quiz game and kept participants engaged, while Reclaim Constitution offered something more thoughtful — printing of the Constitution, sparking small conversations about civic life. The Postcrossing Welfare Society of India brought a delightful old-world charm, encouraging residents to write and distribute postcards and introduced many to the world of philately.

Throughout the morning, Happy Streets presenting sponsors Bhima Jewellers engaged visitors with crowd quizzes and a lucky draw announcement.

Believe it or not!

'A million girls would kill for this job' with Meryl

YOUR POV

LEISURE

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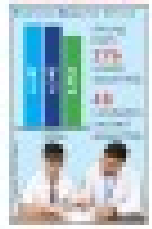
Outperformed Again: Transgenders retain record streak



Board success celebration on hold as topper prepares for NEET UG retest

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Perseverance helps Mumbai girl conquer Math phobia

Twin brothers shine, chase shared dream of AIIMS Delhi

2 attack & threaten architect for honking, click her picture

They Tried To Kill Husband With Stone: Victim

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

ROAD RAGE

Bengaluru: Two men from Doddaballapur Rural have been arrested for allegedly attacking an architect and her husband in a road rage event.

B Rachana, 29, of Rajajinagar, said the trouble began Friday when she honked at an MUV that was blocking her path on Hesaraghatta Main Road near Doddabelavangala. Rachana was driving back home after handing over breakfast to her husband Bharath, who was looking after construction work at their Hesaraghatta farmhouse.

"...When I honked, a man from the MUV came near my window and clicked my photo on his mobile phone. Sensing danger, I called my husband, asking him to rush to the spot. Then, he removed his MUV. I started my car and he again blocked the path after 500 metres. Two men, including the earlier one, came near my window and one of them threatened to break the glass with a stone," Rachana said in her complaint.

"...By then, my husband arrived at the spot. He told them to delete my photo on their mobile. In reply, they beat him up and tried to kill him by dumping a stone on his head," she added.

Further trouble was avoided as two relatives of Rachana, alerted by her, reached the spot. The three men confronted the attackers and alerted police. Soon, the two – M Mahesh, 25, and M Govinda Raju, 39, farmers of Dasenahalli village – were arrested and remanded in judicial custody. "Investigations revealed that they both were under the influence of alcohol. Thinking Rachana was an outsider, they misbehaved with her. We booked them, including for attempted murder," a senior officer said.

Biker attacks BMTC driver

In another incident, a motorist allegedly attacked a BMTC driver after the bus brushed his two-wheeler on Bannerghatta Road recently. However, the public intervened and stopped the biker from further attacking the driver. No complaint has been lodged so far.

Tea shop owner killed over ₹200; onlookers didn't intervene: Cops

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A 40-year-old-tea shop owner from Doddaballapur was bludgeoned to death by a miscreant after he demanded payment of Rs 200 for an unpaid bill from the accused.

The suspect, identified as Muniyappa of Appakranahalli village, on May 12, visited the tea shop owned by Manjunath, a resident of Dyavasandra village in Doddaballapur Rural, and demanded tea and some snacks. "At the time, Manjunath reminded him of the unpaid bill of Rs 200 that Muniyappa had taken on credit earlier and said unless he cleared his dues, no fresh credit would be given," an officer said.

Angered over the refusal, Muniyappa took a wooden log from the shop and thrashed him before fleeing. Though a couple of customers were present, none of them stopped him, police said.

Accused was arrested earlier for stabbing mom

"Last year, Muniyappa had stabbed his mother following a trivial fight. He was then arrested on attempt to murder charges and sent to judicial custody. Customers who were present there were aware of this matter and did not intervene," police said.

Muniyappa, who was absconding after the murder, was arrested on Saturday from his hideout with help of his fellow villagers and sent him to judicial custody.

Realtor alleges threat calls from fugitive don

Rajiv.Kalkod@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: A 54-year-old city-based realtor has filed a complaint with Central Crime Branch (CCB) police alleging that he has been receiving extortion calls from someone claiming to be fugitive underworld don Vicky Shetty.

Complainant GK Shankar from Vidyaranyapura said he first got a WhatsApp call on the morning of April 21, with the caller claiming to be Shetty and demanding money. "You are Shankar, right? You have to send me money and if you don't, you will die during your son's wedding in May," the caller allegedly said in Kannada before disconnecting the call.

Shankar first ignored the call. However, more calls arrived from the same person, who reiterated the threat. "As a precautionary measure, I had switched off my mobile phone for a few days in the first two weeks of May. Now, I'm mentally disturbed and shocked by the calls," Shankar stated in his complaint.

Who is Vicky Shetty?

Also known as Vijay Shetty and Bhaskar Shetty, the gangster, originally from Mangaluru and now thought to be living abroad, is known for using VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) calls to threaten targets and orchestrate crimes.

Facing more than a dozen criminal cases, Shetty was originally associated with gangster Chhota Rajan and later, with Ravi Pujari.

In 2010, he became an independent gangster.

Fearing body would float up, father retrieves and buries girl

▶ Continued from page 1

When the girl fell unconscious, Timmarayappa threw her into a farm well.

In the evening, fearing the body would float up, he returned to the well, fished Meghana's body out, carried it under the cover of darkness to a nearby dry lakebed, and buried her in a shallow grave.

The following day, Nirmala and Timmarayappa filed a missing person's report. One week later, on April 23, Timmarayappa went missing with his bike and some cash from home. Nirmala visited the police station a second time with a similar complaint.

Police launched a manhunt, but couldn't make headway as mobile phones of both Meghana and Timmarayappa were switched off from the dates they were reported missing. The case grew cold within days.

A special police team began visiting neighbouring villages for clues on the missing duo. The breakthrough came on the night of May 15. Police received a tip-off that Timmarayappa had been spotted visiting a friend in a village 3km from his home.

According to the friend, Timmarayappa was roaming around other taluks on his motorbike and sleeping in temples and bus stands just to escape police attention. He had purchased a sim card and a used mobile set at a shop in Kadabagere. The friend claimed Timmarayappa was also seeking advice on how to secure "anticipatory bail in a murder case".

The friend provided Timmarayappa's new mobile number to police. Within minutes, it was found that the "missing" father was in his own village.

On Saturday, police picked up Timmarayappa. Initially, he played the part of a grieving father, pleading total innocence. But under sustained interrogation, he confessed to the murder.

Three rob TSRTC official of cash, 2 mobile phones

Bengaluru: Three miscreants robbed a Telangana State Road Transport Corporation official working in the city of two mobile phones and some cash early Sunday morning.

The victim, K Mahipal, was walking to his office located in the KSRTC bus terminal when the miscreants blocked him close to Sangam Circle, near Majestic, at around 5.30am, police said. "Threatening him, they grabbed the two mobile phones and a wallet with cash in it. Mahipal has not mentioned how much cash was there in the wallet," an officer said. TNN

ALMANAC (18.5.2026)

Vrishabha Masa 03 Shri Parabhava Nama Samvatsara – Uttarayana – Greeshma Ritu - Tithi: Adhika Jyeshtha Shukla Dvitiya h. 17-54 Nakshatra: Rohini h. 11-32 Yoga: Sukarma h. 21-48. 01 Zulhijja Kali Day 1872713

Rahu Kalam 7.30-9am

— KL Vidya Shankara Somayaji

Techies most targeted in cybercrime: Police

▶ Continued from page 1

Until 2023, investment fraud was barely visible in official records. That year, Karnataka registered just 19 such cases — 11 linked to part-time job or task-review scams and eight involving share trading frauds.

The numbers exploded the following year. In 2024, the state recorded 1,821 investment fraud cases. By 2025, the figure had more than tripled to 6,153 cases, including 3,484 share trading frauds and 2,669 part-time job scams.

Police say professionals, especially those working in the IT sector, form a large section of the victims. Many scams begin with casual online interactions before moving to encrypted messaging platforms where victims are shown fake profit dashboards and manipulated trading data to build trust.

Fraudsters increasingly exploit people's familiarity with digital payments and online investing. With more citizens turning to stock markets, cryptocurrency platforms and app-based investing, scammers are finding a larger pool of potential victims.

Even as investment frauds rise, Karnataka's overall cybercrime ranking has slightly improved nationally. NCRB data for 2024 showed Telangana overtaking Karnataka in total cybercrime cases. Telangana reported 27,230 cases, while Karnataka registered 21,993 cases.

DG&IGP MA Saleem attributed the drop in Karnataka's ranking partly to increased public awareness and improved police training that has strengthened investigation.

Man duped of ₹19.5 lakh

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

A man from Mutaga village in Belagavi taluk was duped of Rs 19.5 lakh by fraudsters who promised to double his investment through online trading.

The victim, Bhushan Patil, was added to an investment-related WhatsApp group by an unknown person. He was subsequently lured with continuous messages claiming he could earn high profits in a short period by investing in stock market trading.

Some members in the group created a false impression by sharing fake screenshots and messages showing high returns.

Influenced by these claims, Bhushan Patil transferred a total of Rs 19.5 lakh in stages to various bank accounts provided by the accused during Oct 2025.

After receiving the money, the accused later stopped responding and cut off all contact. Realising he had been cheated, he filed a complaint.

BMTC staff get full 26-month arrears, then return notice arrives

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: For a brief moment Saturday, around 100 employees at BMTC's Yeshwanthpur depot-26 may have felt that long-promised rewards had finally arrived in full. Then came a phone call.

AI

ACCIDENTAL BONANZA

In what the corporation described as a "technical error", a billing clerk accidentally credited the entire 26 months' salary revision arrears to about 100 staff members instead of the approved first instalment covering 11 months. While drivers, conductors, mechanics and administrative staff elsewhere received the correct amount, a lucky few suddenly found themselves financially transported several stops ahead of the schedule.

BMTC, however, moved quickly to pull the handbrake. According to an official clarification issued Sunday, the depot manager informed the central office soon after spotting the discrepancy. The employees who had received the extra amount were contacted and requested to return the money.

The repayments, BMTC clarified, are being collected officially through the department-linked account using a QR scanner at the Chaudeshwari temple bus stop office, complete with receipts. The corporation appeared particularly keen to clarify the point after social media users reacted with suspicion and delight.

Videos circulating online claimed the "26 months' amount belongs to employees" and questioned why the money was being collected "through a temple scanner". BMTC insisted the process is entirely official, transparent and properly documented.

So far, 35 staff members have returned the excess amount. The incident briefly produced what may be Bengaluru's most short-lived salary upgrade. The employees who woke up feeling unexpectedly appreciated by the system were, within hours, being asked to board the return journey.

Street plays promote waste segregation

Bengaluru: As part of the Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0 initiative, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation organised community street plays at three locations to spread awareness on cleanliness, waste segregation, plastic reduction and water conservation.

After attending the programme at Church Street, commissioner Rajendra Cholan urged citizens, NGOs, and apartment welfare associations to work with the civic body to help transform city into a clean, beautiful and healthy place.

Officials also flagged the issue of garbage dumping "black spots".

Street plays were held near Lalbagh West Gate, Indiranagar's KFC bus stop and Church Street. Citizens and officials also took a pledge to support cleanliness. TNN

Family outing turns tragic: Father, 2 sons drown in pond

Ranganath K | TNN

Kolar: Three members of a family, including two children, drowned in a farm pond at Nakkanahalli village under Malur taluk of Kolar district Sunday.

The deceased were identified as Srinivas, 45, and his sons Chetan, 15 and Rajesh, 9.

According to sources, Srinivas had taken his sons to swim in a Krishi honda, or farm pond, belonging to a villager identified as Byrappa, after lunch.

Preliminary information suggests algae formation on the sides of the polyethylene lining made the pond surface slippery, preventing the victims from climbing out after they slipped into the water.

Officials said drowning incidents in farm ponds have been increasing across Kolar in recent weeks. At least four people have died in similar incidents over the past 10 days.

K Narayana Gowda, president, Kolar district Ryot Sangha, recently urged the district administration to make fencing around farm ponds mandatory.

Late on Sunday, expressing concern over the rising number of drowning incidents, deputy commissioner MR Ravi has directed farmers to install fencing around such ponds within a week.

Warning that failure to comply could lead to the closure of unsafe ponds, he also instructed gram panchayat authorities to inspect all farm ponds and ensure protective fencing and warning boards are put in place.

Officials cautioned the polythene lining used in many ponds becomes extremely slippery, making it difficult for anyone to climb back out.

1L students for SSLC Exam-2

Bengaluru: The SSLC exam-2 for academic year 2025-26 will start Monday at 358 centres across the state. According to the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB), a total of 1,15,112 students — 76,673 boys and 38,439 girls — have registered for the exam, which will continue until May 25.

According to KSEAB, the registered students are from 5,488 govt schools, 3,250 aided schools, and 5,060 unaided ones. Among them, 11,881 have enrolled to improve their previous scores. KSEAB data shows that 61,205 regular freshers have registered, while 18,505 are private freshers. A total of 32,833 regular repeaters and 2,569 private repeaters are to sit down for the exam.

KSEAB also said that 7,658 students, who were unable to appear for this year's SSLC exam-1 because of attendance shortage, have registered as private candidates for exam-2. TNN

Blind gaur at zoo is recovering

A day after the gaur from Chikkamagaluru was shifted to Shivamogga zoo, the conservation centre authorities on Sunday said the animal is doing fine.

The gaur, which is partially blind, arrived at Shivamogga zoo around 11 pm on Saturday, covering over 100 km from Aldur in Chikkamagaluru district. The animal was released into a quarantine zone.

Officials plan to build a customised "crawl area" or a protected exhibit space designed for its safety. TNN

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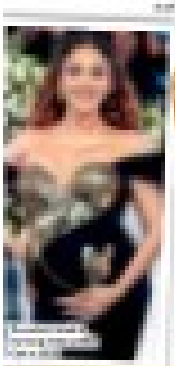

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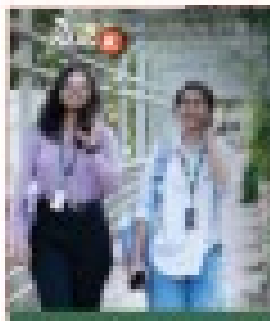

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Districts surge, but urban clusters slow SIR mapping

Pearl.Dsouza@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Urban districts, particularly Bengaluru, are emerging as the biggest challenge in Karnataka's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) voter-mapping exercise, with migration, voter absence and administrative delays slowing progress in the state's largest electoral clusters.

A district-wise mapping report shows that as of May 16, Karnataka has completed 86.5% of the total mapped electors, including progeny mapping. However, the slowest progress has been recorded in Bengaluru's BBMP regions: South has achieved 64.5% completion, Central 64.9%, and North 67.3%, making them the three slowest-performing districts in the state. Bengaluru Urban stands at 75.1%.

In contrast, districts such as Kodagu (96.2%), Bellary (95.7%), Mandya (95.5%), Chitradurga (95.4%) and Chamrajnagar (95.1%) are among the fastest-performing districts in the exercise.

Chief electoral officer V Anbukumar said Bengaluru's scale itself posed a major challenge, noting the city has an electorate of a little more than 1 crore. He said the exercise in urban pockets has slowed because officials were simultaneously engaged in other activities, including the caste census exercise.

"In rural areas the survey was completed earlier, but the exercise was extended in BBMP limits by more than one-and-a-half months. That delay cost them nearly two months," he said.

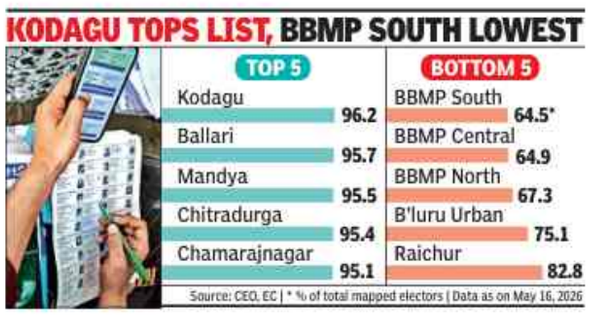
In the past six months, govt staffers have been involved in socio-economic census, 2027 All India census phase 1 and also preparation for elections in Greater Bengaluru Authority.

Anbukumar said urban areas across the state were facing distinct challenges compared to rural regions. He added that authorities were still analysing reasons for incomplete mapping and could only draw conclusions once the exercise nears saturation.

The Election Commission of India has since held review meetings with BBMP officials and directed teams to accelerate the mapping process in Bengaluru's urban constituencies.

Earlier, he clarified to mediapersons that mapping was a preliminary verification exercise and not the basis for inclusion or exclusion from the electoral roll. Even voters not mapped but are already on the 2025 voter roll will still receive enumeration forms.

At the same time, being mapped does not protect a voter from scrutiny later if there are database mismatches or missing previous survey details are flagged during v0erification.



HDK's the one in real estate business: DKS

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar hit back at Union minister and JD(S) state president HD Kumaraswamy over his comments on the Bidadi township project, accusing him and his brother of using the "PRR project as a pretext to run a real estate racket" and "amassing huge wealth" in the process.

Without naming HD Revanna, Shivakumar said: "Kumaraswamy's brother intimidated people and got properties registered in his name along the PRR road stretch. Kumaraswamy is now saying don't develop Bidadi township, but who started it? He himself issued the notification when he was CM. Ask people of Dodda Gubbi and Chikka Gubbi and they tell you how his brother intimidated people and got properties registered for a few lakhs. Now all those properties are worth crores. He should not be talking about others."

On Kumaraswamy urging people not to pay the 2% conversion fee and that he would make khata conversion free when he forms the govt in 2028, Shivakumar said: "He is daydreaming. He won't form the govt. A Congress govt is at the helm and is doing people-friendly work. People are benefiting."

New equations? GTD gives JD(S) convention a miss

R Uday Kumar | TNN

Mysuru: Local legislator GT Devegowda was conspicuous by his absence from JD(S) party's 'Janarondige Janata Dal' convention, an event that turned into a political show of strength in Chamundeshwari assembly constituency Sunday.

Organised with an eye on the next assembly elections, the event drew thousands of party workers and supporters, but Devegowda's absence suggested shifting political equations within the party. HD Revanna's photograph was also missing from posters at the venue, raising eyebrows.

Devegowda met former Prime Minister and party supremo HD Deve Gowda last week and expressed his desire to contest the 2028 polls from Chamundeshwari segment on a JD(S) ticket. However, there has been speculation that he could move to Congress.

Meanwhile, Union minister HD Kumaraswamy and his son and party youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy took centre stage at the convention. MLA GD Harish Gowda and former minister SR Mahesh also made a grand entry amid loud cheers from supporters.

Chamundeshwari segment, remembered for handing chief minister Siddaramaiah a major electoral defeat in 2018, again emerged as a politically symbolic battleground for the regional outfit.

SR Madhusudhan

MAKING PLANS: HD Kumaraswamy chats with GD Harish Gowda, Hunsur MLA and son of GT Devegowda, during the rally on Sunday

Addressing the gathering, Kumaraswamy expressed gratitude to party workers, calling them the backbone of the outfit. Reflecting on a previous bypoll in Chamundeshwari, he admitted strategic mistakes by party brass had cost JD(S), but reaffirmed his emotional attachment to the constituency.

Launching a sharp attack on the Congress govt's guarantee schemes, he argued that the administration was disconnected from hardships faced by ordinary citizens. He claimed that during his tenure as CM, Chamundeshwari segment received more developmental aid than under the present govt.

'Will win 75 seats in 2028'

Yet, he defended the Centre's decision to raise fuel prices, citing the global oil supply crisis caused by the war in Iran. Expressing confidence in the party's revival, Kumaraswamy said JD(S) would secure 75 seats in the next assembly elections and retain Chamundeshwari in 2028. He asserted that the party would remain steadfast, independent and committed to sentiments of its grassroots workers.

Residents must relocate from forests to limit conflicts: Min

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mangaluru: Forest, ecology and environment minister Eshwar Khandre Sunday said the govt is making robust efforts to relocate people living in forests across the state, including Kudremukh National Park, to reduce human-wildlife conflict and aid conservation.

At the inauguration of a two-day cashew mela organised by Karnataka State Cashew Development Corporation at Kadri Park, Khandre distributed cheques worth Rs 2.3 crore to five families from Kudremukh forest region.

The beneficiaries included families from Kerekatte, where two people were killed in elephant attacks a few months ago. All had voluntarily applied for rehabilitation outside forest areas.

"Around Rs 17 crore is currently available for rehabilitation, and within the next month, all those who voluntarily decide to move out will be provided compensation," Khandre said.

He said merely capturing elephants would not solve rising conflicts. "The govt has initiated measures to expand and conserve forest areas by relocating people living in forests," he said.

TOI

REHAB IN MIND: Forest and ecology minister Eshwar Khandre at the cashew mela in Mangaluru on Sunday

The minister said some 1,300 families once resided inside the Kudremukh region. Of these, 350 have been rehabilitated with compensation, while another 300 families have voluntarily applied for relocation. The process will be implemented in phases.

Financial feasibility

He said the long-pending rehabilitation programme has been resumed, but is subject to financial feasibility, and officials have been instructed to identify willing families and expedite relocation. An additional Rs 20 crore has been allocated.

The govt provides Rs 20 lakh compensation to families of those killed in wildlife attacks. In Kerekatte, two members from affected families were given contractual jobs in the forest department on humanitarian grounds.

Khandre said incidents of human-elephant conflict have increased. A dedicated elephant task force has been sanctioned for the Dakshina Kannada district, with 25 personnel trained. Measures include the installation of railway barricades, ensuring food and water for wildlife inside forests, staff recruitment and a command centre.

SHORT TAKES

Implement SOP for trekkers: Khandre

Forest minister Eshwar Khandre directed strict implementation of the recently prepared SOP to ensure safety of trekkers. Trek passports released by Kudremukh Wildlife Division, featuring destinations and QR codes, were distributed. Trekking guide handbooks and first-aid kits were handed over to nature guides. Khandre also flagged off a Shola Safari vehicle and released a handbook for trekkers.

Youth Congress to protest NEET leak

Karnataka Youth Congress will hold a 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' march on Thursday (May 21) to protest the NEET exam paper leak. Several senior Congress functionaries expected to participate. HS Manjunath, president, Congress' youth unit, said the march will begin from Freedom Park. He said the Centre has refused to take responsibility for the leak and the agitation is to support affected students. "The Centre isn't even suggesting that they would punish those responsible. They are making false claims about involving CBI without ensuring actual accountability. We stand with the students who have been unfairly impacted," he said.

Ballari thermal plant lights up state, beats Raichur in power generation

Niranjan.Kaggere @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: For decades, when Karnataka's power demand during summer scaled new heights, it was the towering chimneys of Raichur Thermal Power Station (RTPS) that carried the burden of keeping the state illuminated and cool.

But this summer, the script dramatically changed. Ballari, a district long associated with iron, manganese ore wealth and its famed denim industry, emerged the thermal power capital.

Setting a new benchmark, Ballari Thermal Power Station (BTPS) generated 944 million units of electricity in April, when consumption soared past previous records. While old workhorse RTPS, with an installed capacity of 1,720Mw, generated 939 million units in April, Yermarus Thermal Power Station (YTPS) in Raichur, with an installed capacity of 1,600Mw, generated 812 million units.

File picture

POWER TRIP: Ballari Thermal Power Station generated 944 million units of electricity in April, meeting nearly 35% of demand in the state

While the state consumed 3,449 million units in April 2025, demand rose to 3,933 million units this April. Commissioned in 2007, the highest generation at Ballari Thermal Power Station was 36.8 million units on May 7. Officials put it down to immaculate maintenance of the plant

Senior officials at Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd (KPCL) revealed that BTPS alone accounted for nearly 35% of the state's total thermal power demand during the month despite Karnataka's evolving energy sector being increasingly dominated by renewable energy sources.

Unlike other seasons, thermal plants undergo intense pressure in summer. "Since water storage is low in most hydel reservoirs, power generation is limited and the burden falls on thermal plants to meet surging demand," said a KPCL engineer. "All these years, RTPS shouldered that load. More than 60% of Karnataka would have been powered by RTPS. But for the first time, Ballari (installed capacity of 1,700Mw) has overtaken not just RTPS but all the three state-owned thermal plants."

While the state consumed 3,449 million units in April 2025, demand rose to 3,933 million units this April. Commissioned in 2007, the highest generation at BTPS was 36.853 million units on May 7.

Gaurav Gupta, additional chief secretary (energy) acknowledged the steady performance of BTPS over the years. "The plant has been a saviour this summer, delivering its best performance," he said. "Boilers, steam turbines and generators have all been in good condition and there has been no breakdown despite huge demand and high generation. Coal handling is crucial since it gets its supply from a captive mine at Baranj in Maharashtra and Mandakini in Odisha."

Awareness drive held on dengue

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: On the occasion of National Dengue Day, Bengaluru East City Corporation held a dengue awareness programme at BMTC Central Workshop-02 in Dooravani Nagar.

Organised by the Krishnarajapura urban primary health centre, the programme saw over 100 workshop staff in attendance. Health educators explained dengue symptoms, treatment, and prevention, stressing the need to avoid water stagnation and curb mosquito breeding. Senior health inspector Gururaj highlighted the role of public cooperation in controlling the spread of dengue. A live larva demonstration by senior health inspector Shrishaila Kannaal helped staff understand the mosquito life cycle and identify breeding spots.

An intensive larval survey was also carried out across the workshop premises, including inspection of water storage units, tyres, and waste materials. Larvicidal solution was sprayed in affected areas.

Man, pal held for raping daughter

Raichur: A man and his friend have been arrested following allegations of sexual assault made by a minor in Lingsugur town.

According to police, the incident was reported from Janata Colony, where the girl lodged a complaint alleging that her father and his friend had been sexually abusing her for two years. The girl told police that her father had threatened her against revealing the matter to anyone, including her mother. TNN

Account freezing is a drastic step: HC

▶ Continued from page 1

such freezing, which had the effect of paralysing the functioning of an educational institution, could have been justified only upon a lawful directive emanating from a competent authority exercising statutory powers, and not on the basis of unverified allegations in an intra-society dispute, the judge further added.

Ordinarily, debit freezing of accounts could be justified only when it was backed by authority of law, either at the instance of an investigating agency in connection with a cognisable offence or pursuant to an order passed by a competent court of law.

The power to freeze or attach bank accounts was a drastic measure, which had serious civil consequences, particularly when exercised against an educational society, whose functioning necessarily involved continuous financial transactions for salaries, maintenance and academic activities, Justice Magadum observed.

The petitioner shall operate the said accounts strictly subject to the outcome of the enquiry proceedings pending before the deputy registrar. Any findings or directions that may be issued by the deputy registrar in the said enquiry proceedings shall be binding on the parties, and the respondent bank shall act in accordance with such outcome, if so required in law, the judge further specified in his order while allowing the petition.

Tension over religious conversion in Kodagu

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Madikeri: Tension prevailed in Herur over alleged religious conversion where a building was constructed in a tribal colony to preach Christianity to the villagers.

Following a dispute over the opening of the building, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. According to the villagers, some people from Tamil Nadu tried to inaugurate the building where they planned to teach Christianity. When the people from TN proceeded to inaugurate it, villagers led by former Nakur Shirangala gram panchayat president Mandodi Jagannath filed a complaint with Suntikoppa police.

Kushalnagar circle inspector Dinesh Kumar and Suntikoppa PSI Mohanraj rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Nakur Shirangala gram panchayat administrative officer Srikanth and panchayat development officer Asma inspected the site. Nakur Shirangala gram panchayat chief Jagannath charged that this was a case of religious conversion and asked the social welfare department to initiate action. He said they thought that a house was being built at the spot, but it was used to promote Christianity.

FIGHT OVER BUILDING

Writers slam SIR as 2-day literary festival wraps up

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hubballi: The two-day 12th May Sahitya Mela concluded with a call to continue the struggle against fascist forces and to uphold unity among Dalits, minorities, women, labourers, and other marginalised communities in the state.

Veteran novelist Kum Veerabhadrapp flagged off the protest march demanding the cancellation of SIR (Special Intensive Revision), from Chennamma Circle to RN Shetty Kalyana Mantap. Writer Sabita Bannadi said the govt should have removed the names of the deceased from the voter list, but instead they have removed the names of living people. "This amounts to genocide. Making people appear dead even while they are alive — that is what SIR does," she alleged.

TOI

CALL FOR ACTION

Historian Ashok Shettar said: "A constitutional assault has started in India. Through SIR, crores of people are being excluded. Scholar Ramjan Dargah, poet Moodnakudu Chinnaswamy, educationist Sripad Bhat and others participated in the protest march.

Noor Sridhar spoke about the consequences of SIR in states like Bihar and West Bengal, and stressed that similar repercussions should not occur in other states. He urged the people of Karnataka to be vigilant and raise awareness through anti-SIR protests.

Trio robs student of mobile phone, held

Bengaluru: City police Sunday arrested two youths and a juvenile on charges of robbing a student of his mobile phone in Ramamurthy Nagar earlier in the day.

The victim, Dheeraj, a BBA student at a private college and resident of Banjara Layout, was waiting for his friends at Outer Ring Road around 3am. They had planned to visit Hoskote to have biriyani. "The three accused persons suddenly ambushed Dheeraj and snatched his mobile phone. During the fight, they stabbed Dheeraj on the hand. Other commuters on the road alerted police and shifted Dheeraj to a hospital, where he is recovering," an investigating officer said. Two of the accused, Bhuvan and Mithun, are both aged 23 and are residents of Janakiram Layout. TNN

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we are sad to inform you that, he left us on 17.05.2026, cremation will be held today at Vivek Nagar Ejipura at 12:30 pm
Deeply Mourned by:
Son Deepak Bhaskar and Daughter Nandini Y

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCES

Birthday Remembrance

Smt. Kala Gopinath (Jaishree/Tara)
W/o M.R. Gopinath
18 May 1954 - 28 Jan 2022
We miss you even more on your birthday.
Thank you for your blessings and for always being our guiding light.
Forever in our hearts.
Missed By:
M. R. Gopinath, Shreyas, Bhargavi, Amruta, Suhas & Nevaan

2nd Year Death Anniversary

SMT. R LAKSHMAMMA
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forever cherished, never forgotten.
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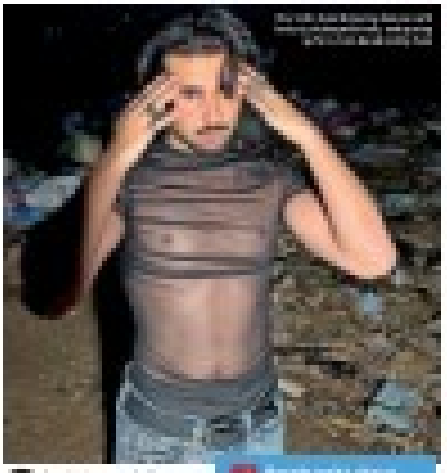
People cannot tell when I'm joking or being serious: Orry



O

People told stories on...they post about me and hold their cameras. She is the person who started it being a fashion influencer on Cannes. Every people are Cannes, but they're not actually relevant at the time. I am actually relevant every day.

I feel stronger now than I did in my teens

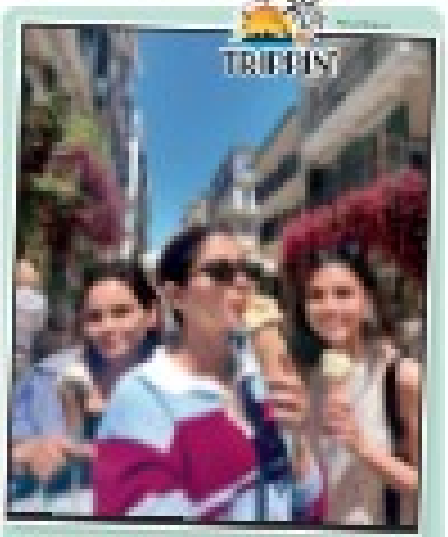
LACHMI KHEMANI

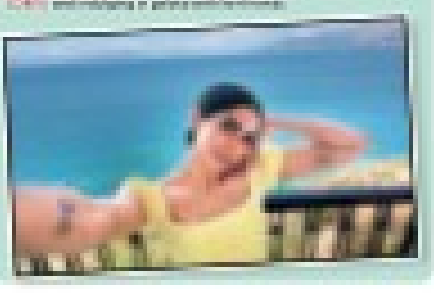
Fan Antoine Saldhan and Orry wedding days. What he says: Orry Bhatt, How Can I say no? Of Bhatt Reddi says, 'I want you to do a film and post look good. I say, that's crazy. We have to responsibly and stay open to friends and colleagues

Films that appeal to global audiences find buyers at Cannes: Pan Nalin

PAN NALIN

'Good to see Indian delegation at Cannes'





Higher education keeps reforming without transforming

Assessments must test critical thinking, not memory

Rather than evaluating students based on their ability to reproduce textbook definitions, institutions should encourage students to innovate and apply knowledge, writes Debabrata Das

Declining enrolment reshapes the identity of arts and science universities

Rewriting automation theory for HEIs to make them SAMARTH

B'luru-Mumbai route finally gets 2nd train

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Ending a three-decade wait, railways will now operate a second direct train connecting Mumbai and Bengaluru. Union railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw virtually flagged off the SMVT Bengaluru–Lokmanya Tilak Terminus Express from the Karnataka capital Sunday.

It will originate from SMVT at 8:35pm Saturdays and Tuesdays and reach Mumbai at 8:40pm the next day. The return service from Mumbai will start at 11:15pm Sundays and Wednesdays and reach Bengaluru by 10:30pm. The train will stop at Sampige Road, Davanagere, Hubballi, Dharwad, Belagavi, Miraj, Sangli, Karad, Satara, Lonand, Pune, Lonavala, Karjat, Kalyan and Thane.

The train will operate as a bi-weekly express between the cities, taking around 24 hours to complete the full journey.

Despite adding a second train to the route, passenger demands which include a faster daily train, are yet to be fulfilled.

TOI

3-DECADE WAIT ENDS

Speaking at the flag-off event, Vaishnaw said a Vande Bharat Sleeper service between Bengaluru and Mumbai is expected to start soon. On the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project, he stated that the network will integrate key hubs, including the airport, Electronic City, Marathahalli, and Hebbal.

"For the Baiyappanahalli–Chikkabanavara and Heelalige–Rajanukunte corridors, land acquisition has been completed and station works are currently in progress. The KSR Bengaluru–Devanahalli alignment has been jointly approved by the state govt and the railways, and the geotechnical survey has been completed. Kengeri–Whitefield alignment was recently approved, and survey work will commence shortly", Vaishnaw said.

A Vande Bharat Sleeper maintenance depot will be established at Thanisandra at a cost of R270 crore, along with a chair car maintenance facility at SMVT costing Rs 52.7 crore.

Criticising the state govt's push for tunnel road corridors in the city, Vaishnaw said Bengaluru needs rail-based solutions for its transport issues. "It needs very realistic, very practical solutions and not very impractical solutions like digging tunnels," he said.

MP Tejasvi Surya requested Vaishnaw for a high-speed rail corridor between Bengaluru and Mumbai.

Unauthorised sheep market sheds removed

Bengaluru: Ahead of Bakrid, Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) carried out a special drive to remove unauthorised sheep and goat market sheds across its limits Saturday.

NORTH CITY CORP

Teams cleared temporary sheds, tarpaulin enclosures, iron barricades, and other illegal structures set up on public roads, footpaths, govt land, and along storm water drains. The operation involved officials from the corporation's animal husbandry, health and engineering departments, and police, and was led by BNCC commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar.

In a release, BNCC said several traders continued operations without permission, despite prior notices. These structures were dismantled using machinery, while some areas saw cooperation from the public. Officials said the drive aimed to ensure smooth traffic flow and sanitation. TNN

Andhra duo caught with phones stolen from rail passengers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: With mobile phone thefts in trains running through Bengaluru becoming a serious issue, Railway Protection Force (RPF) Friday recovered five devices, worth Rs 2.5 lakh, from an Andhra Pradesh-based duo.

The hunt for the duo started following a complaint lodged by a Kerala-based man last Wednesday. His mother's phone was stolen from Platform No. 2 of KR Pura railway station around 5pm Monday. She was about to board the Mysuru-Thiruvananthapuram Express when a stranger allegedly stole her Samsung S25 Ultra from her handbag.

Cantonment railway police, who took up the investigation activated its informants and started searching for useful leads on the whereabouts of the accused. Following credible intelligence inputs and surveillance, the duo allegedly involved in the offence was rounded up by RPF personnel at around 12 pm from KR Pura station.

The accused identified themselves as Vignesh, 30, from Santhepet and J Kumar, 26, from Chittoor. Five mobile phones worth approximately Rs 2.5 lakh were recovered from their possession, including the one stolen in the woman.

SPOTLIGHT

NPS Insights

What is NPS Vatsalya Scheme?
NPS Vatsalya Scheme is a contributory, long-term financial security scheme designed exclusively for minors. This scheme aims to promote financial literacy and financial planning and to encourage empowerment of children, emanating from the vision of "Viksit Bharat@2047".

Who is eligible to open NPS Vatsalya Scheme?
The scheme is available to all Indian citizens, aged below 18 years, including Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs).

How NPS Vatsalya Scheme account can be opened?
The NPS Vatsalya Permanent Retirement Account (PRA) can be opened by parents/guardians through the following modes:
a. Online: eNPS or App/portals of Points of Presence (PoPs)/CRAs
b. Offline: Points of Presence (PoPs)

Minimum contributions under NPS Vatsalya Scheme.
Minimum contribution for account opening is Rs 250 and Rs 10 for subsequent transactions. There is no limit for maximum contribution.

What are the tax benefits?
Deduction up to Rs 50,000 available under Section 80CCD(1B) where contributions are made by the assessee to the account of a minor as parent or guardian (old tax regime only). Deductions upto Rs 1.50 lakh also apply to NPS Vatsalya contribution under 80C.

Subscriber Education and Protection Fund (SEPF) Initiative, by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority

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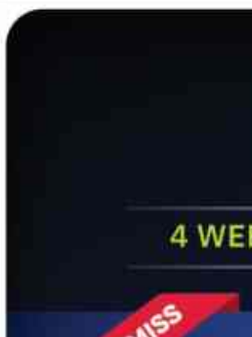
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TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026

JAIRAM RAMESH WARNS GREAT NICOBAR PROJECT, IN ITS PRESENT FORM, IS A RECIPE FOR 'ECO DISASTER'

SHAH SAYS GUJARAT SHOULD TOP SERVICE SECTOR AFTER EXCELLING IN MANUFACTURING AND GREEN ENERGY

HACK OF THE DAY **AUTO-DELETE OLD GOOGLE ACTIVITY SAVED ON THE ACCOUNT**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Helps reduce how much old search, app, location, and YouTube activity stays saved in your Google account

WHAT TO DO: Turn on auto-delete for Google activity instead of manually clearing history once in a while

STEPS:

1. **Open** your Google Account settings
2. **Go to** Data & privacy
3. **Select** the history setting you want to manage, such as Web & App Activity or YouTube History
4. **Tap** Auto-delete
5. **Choose** how long Google should keep that activity before deleting it automatically

CAREFUL: Deleting old activity can reduce personalization. If you rely heavily on history-based suggestions, choose a longer auto-delete window

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

T'gana cops add charge of repeated rape to case against Union minister's son

Police have invoked an additional charge of "repeated aggravated sexual assault on the same person" against Union minister Bandi Sanjay's son Bandi Sai Bageerath, arrested Saturday night in a Pocso case and remanded in judicial custody till May 29. An offence under Section 64(2)(m) of BNS is liable for a minimum punishment of 10 years in jail, extendable to life imprisonment. The original charges against the junior home minister's son – assault or criminal force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty (Section 74) and sexual harassment (Section 75) – have been retained along with the primary accusation of rape of a minor (Section 5 of the Pocso Act).

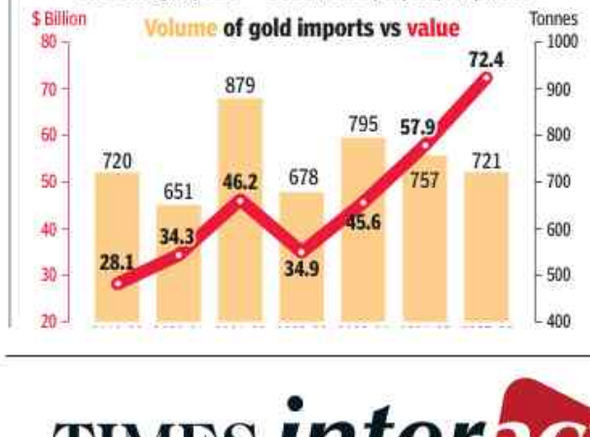
Cyberabad Police shifted Bageerath to Cherlapally central prison, around 28km from Hyderabad, Sunday after producing him in court. The case had been registered on May 8 based on a complaint by the survivor's mother. Bageerath was allegedly absconding until he surrendered at Manchirevula in Narsingi over the weekend. Lawyers accompanying Bageerath at the time of his arrest said they were preparing to file for bail.

Police dismissed reports suggesting the involvement of more than one suspect in the rape case as false, clarifying that only Bageerath had been named in the case so far. TNN

STATOISTICS A slice of life in numbers

India's gold import bill has gone up, but it's buying less

India's gold import bill surged from $57.9bn in FY25 to $72.4bn in FY26. That was not due to a rise in volumes — which declined for two straight years — but driven by a jump in prices



1st made-in-India military plane assembled, ready for test flight

C-295 Aircraft Built By Tatas In Collaboration With Airbus In Guj

Surendra.Singh
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: India has achieved a major milestone in military aircraft production as the first domestically produced C-295 transport aircraft has been assembled at the Tata-Airbus facility in Vadodara and is ready for a flight test.

Air Marshal Awadhesh Kumar Bharti, deputy chief of the air staff, recently visited the final assembly line of the C-295 to get an update.

IAF said in a post on X on Friday, "Deputy Chief of the Air Staff visited the final assembly line of the C-295 at Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), Vadodara, where the first C-295 under the Make in India initiative is getting ready for its first flight. The programme, executed in partnership between TASL and Airbus, represents a major advancement in indigenous aerospace manufacturing and is a significant step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat."

Air Marshal Awadhesh Kumar Bharti inspected the C-295 aircraft at Tata Advanced Systems Limited final assembly line in Vadodara

The Vadodara plant was inaugurated in Oct 28, 2024 by PM Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart, Pedro Sanchez. India had signed a Rs 21,935 crore contract with Spain for 56 C-295 transport aircraft. Of these, 16 are being supplied directly from Spain in fly-away condition, while the remaining 40 are planned to be manufactured in India.

The project is being hailed as a major success for govt's Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives, aimed at reducing dependence on imported defence aircraft.

External affairs minister S Jaishankar had earlier said the first made-in-India C-295 aircraft would roll out before Sept 2026. The C-295, which will replace the aging Avro-748 fleet of IAF, is a medium tactical military transport aircraft designed for troop movement, cargo transport, medical evacuation and special operations missions. It can ca-rry up to 70 troops, 48 paratroopers or 24 medical stretchers.

Powered by two Pratt & Whitney PW127G turboprop engines, it is equipped with short take-off and landing capabilities and can operate from rugged, semi-prepared and short airstrips, making it ideal for Indian operational requirements, especially in mountainous regions and remote forward bases. Each aircraft is being equipped with a custom, indigenous electronic warfare suite jointly developed by DRDO, Bharat Electronics Ltd and Bharat Dynamics Ltd.

El Nino could hit monsoon, Kharif production: Research

Vishwa.Mohan
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New Delhi: With the risk of El Nino looming large over India due to its potential negative impact on monsoon rainfall, a research by a group of farm scientists from an ICAR institution shows that El Nino years in the past reduced output of key Kharif crops, such as paddy and maize, by more than 10% in 77 and 65 districts, respectively, in different states of the country.

The research, led by Subash N Pillai at the ICAR-Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research, notes that the impact of El Nino on yield of the most popular Kharif crop, paddy, was observed significantly in states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, MP, Maharashtra, UP, Jharkhand and Odisha. Besides paddy and maize, yields of sorghum and pearl millets also declined by more than 10% in 36 districts each in the El Nino years.

El Nino is a climate pattern of warming of the ocean surface in central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. It is associated with weaker monsoon in India.

The research study on three El Nino years — 2002, 2004 and 2009 — published in Climate Services journal by Elsevier in 2023, may provide an insight to policymakers and other stakeholders to prepare short-and long-term contingency plans to cope with the situation.

"The study revealed that El Nino years cause significant spatial and temporal variability in Indian summer monsoon rainfall, leading to substantial reductions in the productivity of major Kharif crops such as rice, maize, pearl millet and sorghum across several districts of India. It identified many highly vulnerable districts where crop yields declined by more than 10% during recent El Niño years, emphasizing the need for climate-resilient agricultural planning at the district level," Pillai told **TOI** on Sunday.

Heavy rain alert issued for Kerala

IMD on Sunday issued an orange alert in two districts as heavy rain was reported in various parts of Kerala. It declared orange alert for Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha districts, indicating possibility of very heavy rainfall ranging from 115.6mm to 204.4mm in 24 hours at isolated places.

IGL raises CNG price for second time in three days

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New Delhi: Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) has increased the price of compressed natural gas (CNG) for the second time in three days, a move that may push up freight and passenger fares in the capital.

The price of CNG in the national capital increased by Re 1 per kg, from Rs 88.09 to Rs 89.09, on Sunday. IGL had earlier raised retail CNG prices by Rs 2 per kg on May 15, when oil companies also increased petrol and diesel prices.

It is now priced at Rs 88.70 per kg in Noida and Ghaziabad, and Rs 85.12 per kg in Gurgaon.

Officials said the input cost of gas has increased by more than Rs 10 per kg since Feb amid disruptions in energy supplies arising from geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

Kol protest against bulldozers turns violent, 10 cops injured

Srishti Lakhotia, Rohit Khanna & Dwaipayan Ghosh | TNN

Kolkata: Ten Bengal police and CAPF personnel were wounded, while 21 people were arrested and 25 detained after clashes erupted Sunday at a Park Circus traffic junction in central-south Kolkata during a protest against "bulldozer action" in nearby Tiljala.

Police said protesters hurled stones and bricks at security forces and damaged at least three police vehicles after a crowd gathered around 1.30pm at Park Circus seven-point crossing following a social media call for demonstrations against demolition of two allegedly illegal buildings in Tiljala, a neighbourhood adjoining Topsia. One of those buildings caught fire last Tuesday, killing three people.

Police called the gathering unauthorised and said trouble began when protesters tried to block roads connecting Park Circus, Topsia and EM By-pass-bound stretches. Clashes escalated after forces moved to disperse the crowd.

Police personnel lathi charge protestors, at Park Circus area, in Kolkata, Sunday

ACP (south-east) Chitadeep Pandey, his security guard and OC Rajesh Singh suffered critical wounds and were taken to hospital, police said.

Bricks and broken concrete littered the stretch late into evening as police and CAPF personnel carried out flag marches and searches across adjoining lanes. "Roadblocks were put up to prevent us from entering lanes. We are not ruling out a conspiracy," a police officer said.

DCP (south-east) Saikat Ghosh said police had deployed personnel before protest gathered momentum. "It was an illegal gathering. No permission was taken... Efforts are on to identify the mastermind and verify whether the accused are residents. Strong action will follow," Ghosh said. A protester, who declined to be named, said he reached Park Circus after seeing a social media post. "We were protesting peacefully when police intervened. Situation suddenly turned violent and people started running to save themselves," he said, adding his name had been deleted from electoral rolls during SIR.

Residents of Kasai Para Lane, a densely populated pocket near Park Circus, said residents used two-wheelers to block entry points into lanes as clashes spread. "We don't have any trouble with police. But goons from the protest should not have entered residential areas," a resident said.

Several passengers reject ex-gratia, seek legal recourse

▶ Continued from page 1

Railway teams uncoupled the burning B-1 coach and luggage van from rest of the train within 20 minutes, preventing flames from spreading across remaining AC coaches on one of India's busiest rail corridors. West Central Railway general manager Dilip Kumar Singh ordered an inquiry into cause of fire.

Senior divisional commercial manager Saurabh Jain said accident relief trains, medical vans and four fire engines were rushed to spot. Blaze was brought under control by 8am. Rajdhani left site at 9.48am and reached Kota Junction at 1.15pm.

Relief turned into anger as passengers complained of burnt luggage and lost valuables. Railways gave Rs 5,000 ex gratia payments, but several passengers rejected the compensation and demanded formal legal recourse. Some refused to continue the journey until an FIR was registered. "Recognising demands of passengers, we will evaluate their losses and compensate them as per rules," Jain said.

India also dominated the study's 'dirtier and richer' category

▶ Continued from page 1

However, of the 902 Indian cities examined in the study, 15.3% showed a statistically significant increase in NO2 levels between 2019 and 2024.

India also dominated the study's "dirtier and richer" category, described by researchers as cities where GDP per capita rises alongside increasing pollution. Of the 390 cities worldwide in this category, 35.4% were in India, the highest share for any country.

"These are not failing cities. They are growing cities," the study noted, pointing to automobile-dependent transport, heavy industry, urban sprawl and fossil fuel-based electricity generation as key drivers behind the trend.

Among the prominent Indian cities highlighted in the study's top ten "dirtier and richer" group was Nashik. India also appeared in the study's smallest but most worrying category — "dirtier and poorer" cities — where pollution rises even as local economies stagnate or weaken.

China accounted for 719 "cleaner and richer" cities, the highest number globally. Major urban centres such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu recorded declining NO2 levels alongside rising incomes. Researchers linked this to large-scale air quality interventions, including stricter industrial emission controls, relocation of polluting industries and rapid electrification of public transport systems.

The paper said governance quality, environmental regulation and technology adoption play a major role in determining whether cities become cleaner as they grow richer.

CBSE slashes paper re-evaluation fees

Manash.Gohain@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Amid concerns among students over possible loss of marks due to the use of On-Screen Marking (OSM) for evaluating Class XII examinations, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Sunday sharply reduced the fees for obtaining answer sheets, verification and re-evaluation, even as it defended the digital evaluation system as a globally accepted and transparent method of assessment.

Under the revised structure, the fee for obtaining a scanned copy of an evaluated answer sheet has been reduced from Rs 700 to Rs 100 per subject. The verification fee has been cut from Rs 500 to Rs 100, while the re-evaluation fee per question has been reduced from Rs 100 to Rs 25.

The changes come after some students and teachers raised concerns over use of OSM, a digital evaluation method in which teachers assess scanned copies of answer sheets on screen. The overall Class XII pass percentage declined from 88% to 85% this year, leading to questions over whether evaluation process had affected scores.

Officials said CBSE had first experimented with On-Screen Marking as a pilot project in 2014, but the system was not expanded then because of limitations in scanning infrastructure, bandwidth and digital evaluation capacity across regions.

According to ministry of education, CBSE implemented it with improvements in digital infrastructure and large-scale examiner training. The board cited the need for greater standardisation, reduction in totalling errors and tighter security in evaluation processes.

School education secretary Sanjay Kumar said there was "no direct correlation" between OSM and the decline in scores or pass percentage.

Officials said students can apply for scanned copies of answer sheets between May 19 and May 22, while verification and re-evaluation applications can be submitted between May 26 and May 29.

Chinese man enters Bihar illegally with 'toys', arrested

Chandra Bhushan Pandey | TNN

Motihari: A Chinese national was arrested Sunday while allegedly attempting to enter India illegally from Nepal through the Raxaul border in Bihar, with officials saying they intercepted him as he tried to sneak in with a suspicious consignment of fighter plane toys and Spiderman masks.

Yao Shuzhang (57) claimed he is a toy trader, immigration officers said, adding he had a Chinese passport but no visa for India.

Shuzhang told the officers he had arrived in Nepal's Chitwan region on May 11 for business purposes and later attempted to move to India via the Raxaul border. He speaks only Chinese, making interrogation difficult. Sashastra Seema Bal jawans intercepted Shuzhang near Maitri bridge on the border during a routine checking drive. Officials are investigating the real purpose of visit, contacts, his plans in India.

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tender & notices

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BID SUBMISSION & ENQUIRIES

Detailed technical specifications, tender documents, and terms & conditions are available on the official Plaksha University website: plaksha.edu.in/tenders. The same can also be obtained upon request. Last date of bid submission 10th June 2026.

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personal

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I Siddharth Joshi S/O, Rahul Joshi R/o Flat No 203 Spectra Raywoods, 60 Millers Road, Benson Town, Bengaluru have changed my name to Siddharth Noah Joshi.

I, Harshavarthini M S D/o Madhu Manikandan R, R/o Vandana Earls Court Apartment, Kudlu, Flat No. B208, Bangalore 560068 have changed my name from Harshavarthini M to Harshavarthini M S vide Affidavit dated 12.05.2026 before Notary Public Bangalore.

I, Govindaraj Pai Nara Singh, R/o No 159,AECS B Block, Hal BDA Layout, Singasandra, Bengaluru – 560068 have changed my name to Govindaraj Pai for all purposes.

I, Abishek M, S/o Manju P, residing at 143, 5th Main Road, Gandhinagar, Okalipuram, Bengaluru - 560021, have changed my name to John Abishek M vide affidavit dated 28.01.2026.

I, Reshmi Govindaraj Pai Nara Singh, R/o No 159,AECS B Block, Hal BDA Layout, Singasandra, Bengaluru-560068 have changed my name to Reshmi B for all purposes.

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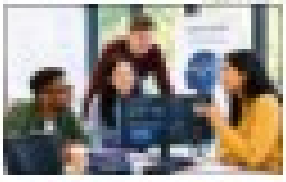

Business should not be treated as an antithesis of good design

Sri SIDDARAMAIAH
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

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Sri D.K. SHIVAKUMAR
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

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1997-2026	May 2023 - May2026
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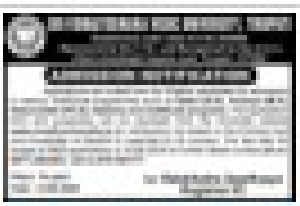
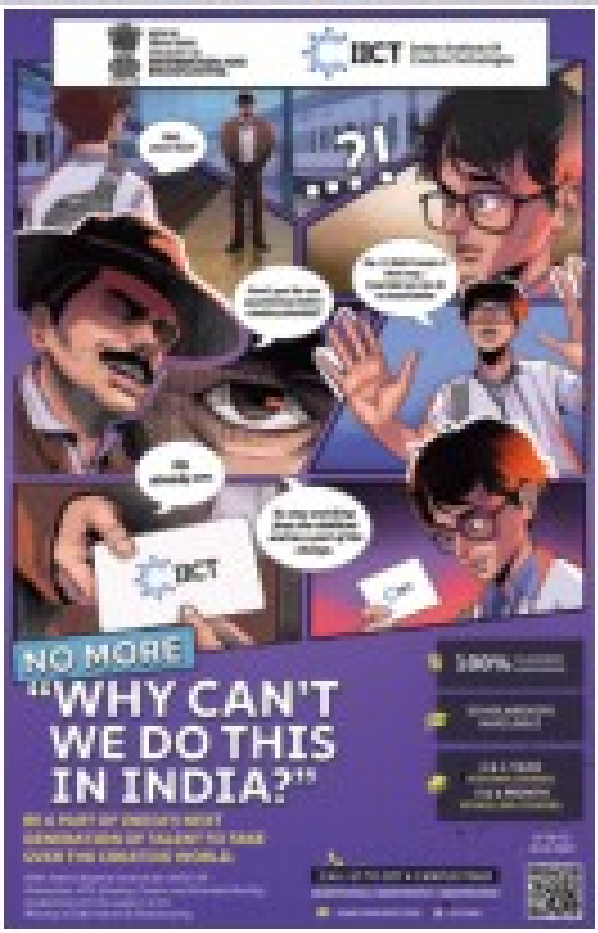


NEET UG paper leak pushes medical exam towards CBT



KC emerges as key power centre in cabinet formation

▶ Continued from page 1

Cabinet formation was marked by intense negotiations and factional lobbying within the Congress. Satheesan reportedly faced sustained pressure from the camp led by Venugopal for inclusion of nominees. Though Venugopal missed out on the chief minister's post, his camp is understood to have emerged with significant influence in the final composition.

According to party sources, seven of the 11 Congress ministers are considered close to Venugopal. His camp is also believed to have secured key portfolios, strengthening its position in the new administration.

Chennithala had stayed away from the Congress Legislature Party meeting in protest against the leadership's decision not to consider him for the CM's post. AICC general secretary Deepa Dasmunshi and Lok Sabha MP K C Venugopal are understood to have played a role in convincing Ramesh to join the govt. Sources said Satheesan assured him that the portfolio of his choice would be allocated to him.

IANS

Kerala CM-designate VD Satheesan (right) with governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, at Lok Bhavan on Sunday

Defending the final composition, Satheesan said the selection process involved balancing multiple factors. "There are many deserving candidates in the party who could have become ministers. Social and regional balance, along with women and Dalit representation, were key considerations in finalising the cabinet. The Congress has attempted to ensure broad social representation and included two members from Scheduled Caste communities in the ministry," he said.

The 21-member UDF cabinet list was submitted to Governor Rajendra Arlekar by Satheesan on Sunday evening ahead of the swearing-in ceremony on Monday. Satheesan said the entire ministry would be sworn in together, marking the first time in nearly six decades that the complete UDF cabinet would take oath simultaneously.

Portfolio discussions continued late into Sunday. According to indications, Satheesan is likely to retain Finance, Law and Ports, while Home and Vigilance may go to Ramesh Chennithala. Revenue is expected to be handled by Sunny Joseph, Health by Anilkumar, Tourism and Culture by Vishnunadh, Excise and Cooperation by Lijju, Women and Child Development by Bindhu Krishna, Forest by T Siddique, Backward Class Development by K A Thulasi and Sports and Youth Affairs by O J Janeesh. The portfolio for Roji M John remained undecided till late evening.

The allied parties are also yet to receive final clarity on portfolios. Though Kerala Congress (Joseph) had pressed for two cabinet berths, the Congress leadership reportedly persuaded the party to settle for one ministerial position along with the Chief Whip post. Mons Joseph is expected to receive Water Resources and Irrigation. Even though Anoop Jacob has been made minister now, the Congress has asked him to share the cabinet berth with Mani C Kappan on a term basis. A final decision on this has not been taken.

Discussions are also continuing over the portfolios of Shibu Baby John and Anoop Jacob. While C P John is likely to be allotted Transport, Anoop Jacob is understood to be seeking Food and Civil Supplies. Shibu Baby John has reportedly staked claim over Water Resources and Irrigation, a portfolio already expected to go to Mons Joseph. Ramesh had reportedly also sought the inclusion of one of his supporters in the cabinet, but the demand did not materialise.

Satheesan also announced that Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan will become speaker while Shanimol Usman has been chosen as deputy speaker.

The induction of O J Janeesh and K A Thulasi emerged as surprise inclusions. Leaders such as Shanimol Usman, Anwar Sadath, V T Balram and Chandy Oommen were reportedly considered until the final stages but failed to secure cabinet positions amid internal group equations within the Congress.

Against Role Models

CITY CITY BANG BANG

SANTOSH DESAI

If Hitler told you a good joke, would you laugh? It's an uncomfortable question, one that makes us squirm a little. After all, who can laugh with a monster? But what if the joke was really funny? What if it appeared in a book many years after his death? Would the joke still work?

The honest answer is that it well might. The trouble with a joke is that it bypasses our internal monitor and acts directly before we have had the time to inspect it for correctness. It depends on surprise, on incongruity. Some of us may feel some shame afterwards, but in the moment, a joke might well just be a joke, no matter who told it. The truth is that we don't always process people as a whole, they come to us as fragments— a joke, a limp handshake, a gesture, a bored expression.

This is what makes our quest for role models so perplexing. The desire to find people to emulate is rooted in the idea that someone as a whole is worthy enough to try and replicate. One can understand why this need arises. The world is a complex place, with far too many contradictions. A role model gives us a ready script to read off. Here is someone who has apparently figured things out and reached a destination we would love to reach. It could be a parent, a teacher, a cricketer, a founder, a saint, or a film star. Someone who embodies qualities and outcomes that we can currently only dream of.

The phrase role model itself is an interesting one. A role is something performed. A model is something simplified so that it can be copied. First, a person is turned into a role. Then the role is turned into a model. What remains is not a life, but an instructional diagram, a formula that can be applied.

One can understand why this works when we are young, or when someone makes a previously unimagined option a viable one. Abstract qualities like courage or determination need to be made concrete. And a human figure does just that. Courage becomes meaningful when somebody stands up for a conviction while others turn the other way. The idea of integrity becomes real when a person loses something because they stood their ground.

And yet, the idea of a role model is not only inherently flawed but even dangerous. For everyone is imperfect in some way. This is obvious. The deeper problem is that no human quality exists in isolation. Courage is never just courage. It comes mixed with temperament, vanity, fear, discipline, injury, ambition, resentment, faith, insecurity and luck. Gandhi's courage cannot be extracted from Gandhi as if it were a vitamin. To admire courage in him is legitimate. To convert him into a total template is childish.

Admiration is valuable because it allows us to acknowledge qualities that we may lack but desire. But when carried too far, we are giving someone authority over our imagination. We are being colonised by our admiration, without even realising it. Admiration needs more thought, for in admiring someone, we submit to a hierarchy of our creation

We simply cannot transplant one life into another. There is no way to splice the outward apparent reality of someone into an internal mechanism for us. When we do, often what we imbibe is a distorted version of the original quality. Their discipline becomes our anxiety. Their boldness becomes our recklessness. Their simplicity becomes our affectation. Their refusal to compromise becomes our inability to listen. Without the totality of their experience, which gave birth to an admired quality, our imitation is likely to be a warped version of what we seek.

Admiration is valuable because it allows us to acknowledge qualities that we may lack but desire. But when carried too far, we are giving someone authority over our imagination. We are being colonised by our admiration, without even realising it. One way to think about it is that having a low bar for liking people and a very high one for admiring them might serve us well. Liking is social, forgiving, and everyday. There is something guileless about liking someone; explanations are usually not necessary. Admiration needs more thought, for in admiring someone, we submit to a hierarchy of our creation.

Today, there is no dearth of people who offer themselves up for admiration. We are surrounded by celebrities, social media influencers, sportspeople and politicians who are people we 'follow'. The problem is that most often, the admiration is not even linked to an inherent quality but to their external success. Admiration is often outcome read backwards as worth.

Someone achieves something, and we retrofit a story around the victory. We interpret aggression as clarity. What was pure luck gets reframed as vision. Rank cruelty gets seen as toughness. Every event in the person's life gets seen as some sort of lesson, something to glean meaning from.

The answer is not to stop learning from people. That would be foolish. Who we are is often a pastiche of other people's actions and ideas. A teacher's inflexion, a parent's stoic silence, a cricketer's swagger, a writer's way of phrasing a turn, a friend's ability to take things in their stride. These things enter us almost invisibly.

But when we seek to be like someone, we set ourselves up for disappointment. Because the image we have in our mind was never true. The part was mistaken for the whole. The statue we had erected must be taken down, not in anger, but because it is blocking our view.

santosh365@gmail.com

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Why would I be jealous of Vijay: Rajini

Times News Network

Chennai: Thespian Rajinikanth Sunday dismissed suggestions that he was "jealous" about C Joseph Vijay's political rise, saying he felt "exhilarated" seeing someone from the film industry become CM and take on both Dravidian parties and the BJP-led Union govt.

PTI

Rajinikanth speaks to the media, in Chennai, Sunday

"He could achieve more than what NTR and MGR could at such a young age," he said. "I'm not in politics. I confirmed I would stay away from politics. Why would I envy Vijay," the actor told reporters outside his Poes Garden residence on Sunday.

"There is a 25-year gap between Vijay and me, and I have made it clear that seeing each other as competitors is not good for either of us. I might or might not have felt jealous if my contemporary Kamal Haasan became chief minister," he said.

He said Vijay entered politics at the right time, when people were looking for an alternative to the 60-year rule of the Dravidian parties.

"People have a lot of expectations from Vijay. I'm confident he will fulfil them. But they should spare him for at least two years so he can function effectively. His fans and cadre should be extra careful, because all their actions will have an impact on him," he said. About meeting the CM, Rajinikanth said he was not interested in the customary meeting. "I met M Karunanidhi in 1996 because he wanted to meet me."

Don't underestimate newcomers: Kamal

Madurai: "Shouldn't we give him six months? We should neither underestimate newcomers nor expect too much from them," actor Kamal Haasan, who heads Makkal Needhi Maiam outfit, told reporters at Madurai airport on Sunday. Asked about Rajinikanth's comment that he would have been jealous had Kamal won, he said, "We compete, but we have never been jealous. We are the best sportsmen you can find in Tamil Nadu." TNN

TELANGANA GRAMEENA BANK
(Scheduled Bank Owned by Government)
HEAD OFFICE : HYDERABAD
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NOTIFICATION - SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR FOR CIVIL & LANDSCAPE WORKS - TGB HEAD OFFICE BUILDING
Ref. No.: TGB/E/2026-27/03 Date: 18.05.2026
Telangana Grameena Bank invites e-tenders under Two Bid System (Technical Bid & Price Bid) from eligible contractors for the following work.

Name of the Work	Construction of Telangana Grameena Bank Head Office Building (Two Cellars + Stilt Floor + Five Upper Floors) on Bank's own plot situated in Sy. Nos. 417 & 420, Plot No. 79, Uppal Bhagayath Layout, Uppal, Hyderabad, Telangana. (Civil & Landscape Works)
Estimated Cost	18,09,64,369.40/- (Rupees Eighteen Crores Nine Lakhs Sixty Four Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Nine and Paise Forty only) plus GST.
Due Date for Submission of Tender	Up to 2.00 PM on 08.06.2026.

The tender document and tender schedule may be downloaded from the Bank's website www.tgb.bank.in under the Tenders section or from the website www.etender.sbi.
Corrigendum / Addendum., if any, shall be published only in the above websites.
Place: Hyderabad General Manager
Date: 18.05.2026 (Operations)

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of the Chief Engineer (Cauvery Head Works)
8th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009.
No: BWSSB/CE(CH)TE/TA/07/2025/79/2026-27 Dated: 14-05-2026
INVITATION FOR TENDER - (CALL-3)
(Through KPP Portal Only)
BWSSB invites Tenders in Two Stage Tender System from eligible Contractors for the work of **Comprehensive Operation & Maintenance (O & M) of CWSS Stage-IV, Phase-II, 550 MLD Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at T.K. Halli for 5 years.**
Amount Put to Tender: Rs. 2951.85 Lakhs EMD: Rs. 30.00 Lakhs
Last Date and Time for Submission of Completed Tender Document is on **16-06-2026 upto 16.30 Hours.** The Technical Bids will be Opened on **17-06-2026 at 17.00 Hours.** The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-Procurement Portal Process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.
Sd/-
DIPR/CP/708/Adverto/2026-27 Chief Engineer (Cauvery Head Works)

Govt. of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Panchayath Raj Engineering Division, Vijayapur
Tel.No:08352-277816, Fax.No:08352-277817,
E-Mail:zpebjp9@yahoo.co.in
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಕಾಇಂ/ಪಂ.ರಾ.ಇ.ವಿ/ವಿಜ/ಪ್ರಾ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/2026-27/431 ದಿನಾಂಕ:15.05.2026
TENDER NOTIFICATION (Two Cover System)
Executive Engineer, PRE Division, Vijayapura has invited e-tender for the works under the Various Grant scheme for the year 2025-26 Work Indent No. RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT26516, 26506, 26512, 25473, 25474 & 26584 **for General Bidders,** RDPR/2026-27/RD/WORK_INDENT26585 & 26741 **for CAT-2A Bidders,** Rs. 35.00 Lakhs to Rs.200.00 Lakhs Total 8 work vide Tender Publication No.431 Date: 15.05.2026. Last Date for submission of Tender is 02.06.2026 time 5.30 PM.
For more information about the tender, the information can be collected at the website www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in or visit the office of the said Division during office hours.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, P.R.E. Division, Vijayapur
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/101/ಶಿಎಸ್ ಎಂಸಿಎ/2026-27

National Dairy Development Board
PB No. 40, Anand, Gujarat-388001, Tel: 02692-260 148/149/160 Fax: 02692-260 159
Website: http://www.nddb.coop, Email: purchase@nddb.coop
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) / LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (LCB)
Bids are invited on behalf of Service Recipients/ NDDB from eligible bidders for the works listed below:

Sl. No.	Description of works / Bid Reference	Estd. Cost (₹) incl GST/Duration	Event Start / Close Date	Bid submission / opening date & time
A	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning the following:			
I	Landscaping Works at Verka Dairy, Mohali, Punjab. NDDB/HO/Purchase/14/26-27/ET/14[Landscape-Mohali]	65 Lakh / 04 Months	19.05.26 09.06.26	09.06.26 15:00 hrs. 09.06.26 15:30 hrs.
II	2 × 10 TPH automatic and 1 × 1 TPH manual solid fuel boilers at Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh. NDDB/HO/Purchase/15/26-27/ET/15[Boiler-Kuppam]	1215 Lakh / 12 Months	19.05.26 09.06.26	09.06.26 15:00 hrs. 09.06.26 15:30 hrs.
III	NH_3 based Refri. plant works for CW, thermal storage & DX loads of CS & DF with PUF panel works at Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh. NDDB/HO/Purchase/16/26-27/ET/16[Refri-Kuppam]	1900 Lakh / 12 Months	20.05.26 10.06.26	10.06.26 15:00 hrs. 10.06.26 15:30 hrs.
IV	5 LLPD Effluent Treatment Plant at Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh. NDDB/HO/Purchase/17/26-27/ET/17[ETP-Kuppam]	675 Lakh / 12 Months	21.05.26 11.06.26	11.06.26 15:00 hrs. 11.06.26 15:30 hrs.
V	7 KLPD Effluent Treatment Plant at OBPI Berhampur, Odisha NDDB/HO/Purchase/18/26-27/ET/18[ETP-Berhampur]	120 Lakh / 06 Months	18.05.26 08.06.26	08.06.26 15:00 hrs. 08.06.26 15:30 hrs.

For further details pertaining to IFB and for downloading the bid document, please visit these websites: **www.nddb.coop** and **www.mstcecommerce.com/eprocn** For any clarification please contact **Group Head (Purchase), NDDB, Anand**-388001.
NB: Any corrigendum/modification etc. will be posted only on these websites.

32001/219/2627
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
O/o THE CHIEF ENGINEER AND BASIN MANAGER
MAHANADI BASIN, AT-BURLA, DISTRICT-SAMBALPUR, PIN-768017
E-mail Id - cebmumbburla@gmail.com
'e' Procurement Notice No-CE & BM-MB-02/2026-2027 (Online)
BID IDENTIFICATION NO- CE & BM-MB-02/2026-2027 (Online)
1. Name of the work : Renovation of Canal System of Hirakud Dam Project (Papanga Canal Section, Burla Irrigation Division, Burla)
2. No of works : One (01) number
3. Class of contractor : "Special Class" and "Super Class"
4. Bid identification No : CE&BM-MB-02/2026-2027 (Online)
5. Estimated cost : Rs. 27.97 Crores
6. Period of completion : 24 (Twenty-Four) Calendar Months
7. Date and time of availability of Bid Documents in the portal : Dated- 20.05.2026 at 11.30 AM to Dated- 10.06.2026 upto 5.00 PM.
8. Last date/time for receipt of Bids in the portal : Dated- 10.06.2026 upto 5.00 PM.
9. Date of opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I) : Dated- 11.06.2026 at 11.30 AM, O/o Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi Basin, Burla
10. Name and Address of the Officer inviting Bid : Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, Mahanadi Basin, Burla, Dist-Sambalpur, Odisha, 768017, Email Id: cebmumbburla@gmail.com
1. Any addendum/corrigendum/ cancellation/ erratum of tender can also be seen in the said Website.
2. Further details can be seen from Government Website **http://tendersodisha.gov.in.**
Sd/-
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager
Mahanadi Basin, Burla
OIPR - 32001/32508/1/26-27/0004

25001/167/2627
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, RAYAGADA
Email ID-ccerwcrayagada@gmail.com
Letter No. 1556 Date : 12.05.2026
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING Through GePNIC
e_Procurement Notice
1. Name of the work : Road works for the Year 2025-2026 & 2026-2027 (Total Thirty-One (31) Nos of Works)
2. Class of contractor : "B" Class, "A" Class of (Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authority.
3. Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.104.63 Lakhs to Rs.576.34 Lakhs (Approximately)
4. Details projects : As per Annexure attached.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Rayagada	NCB-02 / RWCRGDA /2026-2027	Dt. 22.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt. 9.06.2026 Upto 5.00 P.M.	Dt. 08.06.2026 Upto 5.00 P.M.	Dt. 10.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

5. The details of works can be seen from the website **https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in**
6. Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e-tender website.
Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer
RW Circle, Rayagada
OIPR - 25001/25196/1/26-27/0006

25001/165/2627
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, RAYAGADA
Email ID-ccerwcrayagada@gmail.com
Letter No. 1578 Date: 12.05.2026
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING Through GePNIC
e_Procurement Notice
1 Name of the work : Road works for the Year 2026-2027 (Total Thirty- Two (32) Nos of Works)
2 Class of contractor : "B" Class, "A" Class of (Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authority.
3 Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.105.11 Lakhs to Rs.446.16 Lakhs (Approximately)
4 Details projects : As per Annexure attached.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bids
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Rayagada	NCB-04 / RWCRGDA /2026-2027	Dt.22.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt.9.06.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.08.06.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.10.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

5. The details of works can be seen from the web site https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in
6. Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e-tender web site.
Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
RW Circle, Rayagada
OIPR-25001/25196/1/26-27/0004

25001/168/2627
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE BOLANGIR
e Procurement Notice
1. Name of work : Construction of Roads in the district of Bolangir and Subarnapur under the Scheme of Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana (MMSY) for the year 2026-27
2. No. of works : 43 (Forty Three) works.
3. Time for completion varies from : 6 (Six) to 9 (Nine) Calendar months
4. Approximate estimated cost varies from : Rs. 103.70 lakhs to Rs. 368.74 lakhs
5. Mode of Submission of tender : Tender should be submitted online in www.tendersodisha.gov.in
6. Other details are as follow :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding		Last Date and Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Bolangir	BLGR-Online-04/2026-27	22.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	17.06.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	16.06.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	18.06.2026 11.00 A.M.	The date will be intimated later on

• Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
• Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender website only.
Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
R.W.Circle, Bolangir
OIPR - 25001/25118/1/26-27/0004

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17.05.2026 23.07.1993
SHRI. RAJESH L REDDY
LRIS Director
Preethiya Theru Movie Second Hero
Passed away on 17.05.2026, 8:30 pm
Funeral at SCTIT [LRIS School] campus
on 18.05.2026, 3pm onwards
Vignan Nagar,Kaggadasapura
Deeply mourned by:
Family members
S Lokesha Reddy & Family
9880021222, 9900000222

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

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TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT
THREE YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT
MILESTONES

Sri D.K. SHIVAKUMAR
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Construction of **15** new Regional Transport Offices at a cost of **₹70.12** crore I Construction of 6 additional new RTOs in progress at a cost of **₹39.25** crore.

Automated/ Computerised Driving Test System (ADTS)

Establishment of Automated Driving Test Tracks at **45** different locations across the state at a cost of **₹266.00** crore

High Security Registration Plates (HSRP)

Installation of High Security Registration Plates for over **59** lakh vehicles across Karnataka

Geo-Fencing

Implementation of Geo-Fencing based m-Vahan Fitness App across **66** RTOs I Fitness Certificates issued only after successful inspection

Automated Vehicle Inspection Centres

Construction of Automated Vehicle Inspection Centres at **12** locations under the DBFOT model and **20** locations under the BOO model under the PPP scheme is in progress

Smart Enforcement

Installation of AI-based cameras at **7** toll plazas on major national highways at a cost of **₹5.65** crore and at **80** additional locations at a cost of **₹70.00** crore is in progress

Centralized Printing Facility (CPF)

Microchip-based RC and DL Smart Card system with centralized printing facility I Karnataka ranks **4th** in implementation of this project

Heavy Vehicle Driver Training Institutes

Heavy Vehicle Driver Training Institutes established at Bengaluru, Dharwad, Kalaburagi and Mangaluru at a cost of **₹46.00** crore I Construction of institutes at Ballari, Vijayapura, Nagamangala and Shivamogga at a cost of **₹21.00** crore is in progress

Contactless / Online Services

Sarathi - **15** Contactless Services
Sarathi - **16** Non-Contactless Services
Vahan - **9** Contactless Services
Vahan - **12** Non-Contactless Services

Retro Reflective Tape

Installation of **Retro Reflective Tape and Rear Marking Plates** in vehicles to reduce accidents

Seizing Yard

Seizing Yard established by KSRTC at Chandapura, Bengaluru at a cost of **₹1.48** crore I Construction of Seizing Yards at Devanahalli, Bengaluru and Mangaluru at a cost of **₹7.58** crore is in progress

Karnataka Motor Transport and Other Related Workers Social Security and Welfare Board

The Transport allied Workers Board is presently functioning under the Labour Department I Approval has been obtained from the Cabinet for bringing it under the Transport Department. It will be brought under the jurisdiction of the Transport Department after obtaining approval in the upcoming Legislative Assembly I Provision of scholarship assistance, accident compensation, natural death compensation and funeral assistance, marriage assistance, maternity benefits for beneficiaries/spouses, educational assistance for children, provident fund, housing and old-age home facilities

Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) Policy

Implementation of the RVSF scheme for scrapping old polluting vehicles I A total of **11,368** vehicles scrapped so far

New Software for Pollution Under Control (PUC) Certificate

Inspection of **5,95,000** vehicles and issuance of certificates

Driver Drowsiness & Attention Warning System (DD & AWS)

Installation of Driver Drowsiness & Attention Warning Systems in **300** KSRTC buses at a cost of **₹2.50** crores for early identification of Driver drowsiness / behaviour to avoid accidents

Vehicle Location Tracking Device (VLTD) & Emergency Button Project

Installation of VLTD and Panic Button system as per Central Government - MORTH (Ministry of Road Transport & Highways) guidelines in **2,25,560** public service vehicles to enhance safety of women and children I Establishment of Command and Control Centre at the Office of the Transport Commissioner at a cost of **₹22.00** crore.

Hon'ble Transport & Muzrai Minister **Sri Ramalinga Reddy** participated in the programme of Road Safety Campaign

As enshrined in our Constitution, - to safeguard public property and to abjure violence is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India.

Commissioner Transport and Road Safety
1st Floor, TTMC Building, 'A' Block, K.H. Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru - 560027
www.transport.karnataka.gov.in Email: transcom@nic.in Tel.No.: 080-22214900

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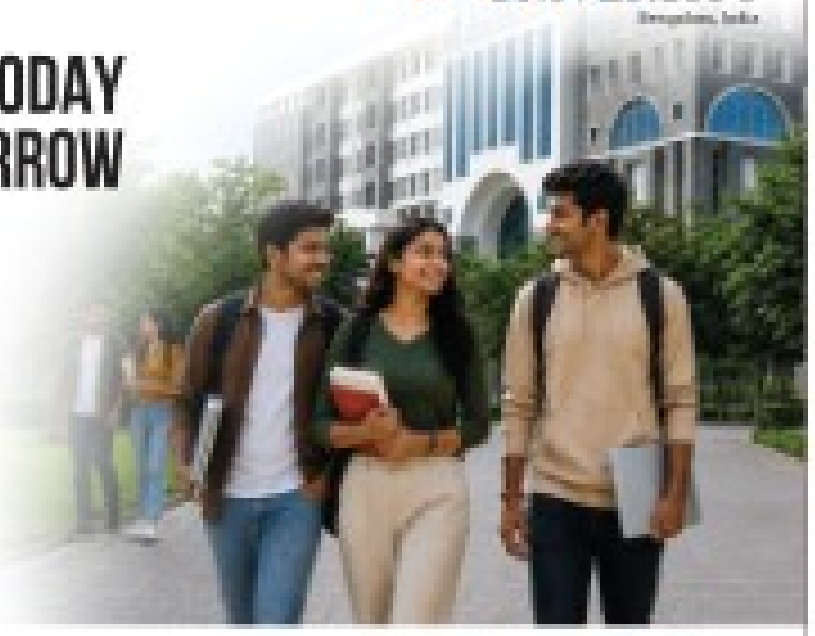

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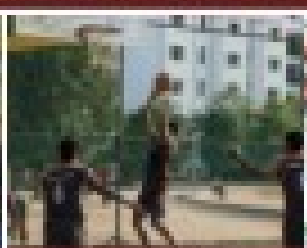
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An Exam That Never Ends: What NEET Retest Is Doing To Young Indians' Minds

Students across India are not just dealing with deep anxiety, burnout, exhaustion and fear. They are losing faith in the examination system itself

TEAM TOI

Aspirants doing a last-minute revision before appearing for the NEET-UG exam in Srinagar on May 3

For lakhs of NEET aspirants, May 3 was supposed to mark the end of a long, punishing journey.

After years spent inside coaching classrooms, endless mock tests and revision schedules, students across India finally allowed themselves to exhale. Some boarded trains home. Some left for vacations. Others simply slept without alarms — for the first time in months.

Then came the shock: the NEET exam was cancelled.

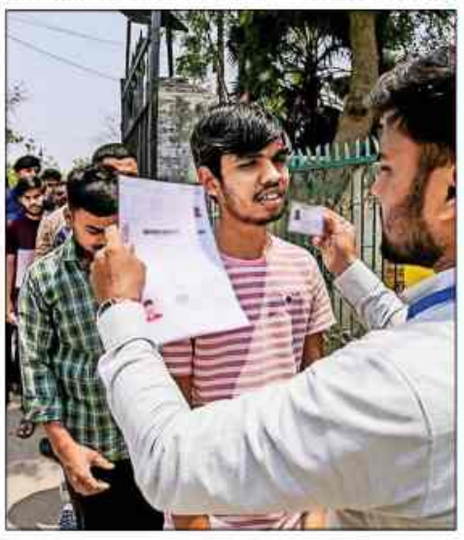
What was meant to be a brief recovery period turned into another month of uncertainty, revision and fear.

The fortnight since the announcement has triggered a wave of anxiety, anger, and emotional collapse among students across the country. Aspirants who believed they had crossed the finish line suddenly found themselves dragged back into preparation mode for the June 21 retest.

Counsellors, psychiatrists and coaching centres say students are showing signs of burnout, panic, insomnia, and severe emotional distress. Many are struggling not only to restart preparation, but also to rebuild confidence in a system they once trusted unquestioningly.

For a generation raised to believe that discipline and sacrifice guarantee success, the sudden shifting of the goalpost has left behind a painful question: if years of hard work can be undone overnight, what exactly are students supposed to trust?

TOI reporters spoke to students and families across India. What emerged was not merely frustration over a cancelled exam but a portrait of a generation emotionally stretched to breaking point.



In Rajasthan's coaching hubs of Kota, Jaipur and Sikar, the emotional impact has been particularly severe. Thousands of students who had spent years preparing for one of the country's toughest entrance examinations now find themselves battling anxiety, sleeplessness, loss of concentration and emotional exhaustion. Many aspirants said the exam had represented the end of years of sacrifice and pressure. Instead, they now find themselves trapped in the same cycle all over again

'We Had Finally Relaxed'

Students from across the country say that the re-examination decision has forced them abruptly back into preparation mode. Books that had been packed away are back on study tables. Coaching centres have restarted mock tests, accelerated revision schedules, and counselling sessions. Several institutes that had already declared toppers after the provisional answer key are quietly withdrawing announcements, taking down congratulatory posters, and asking students to return gifts and awards.

"Students have cancelled holidays, and many who had left for vacations have cut short their trips and returned," said Sudha Shenoy, a parent representative.

For many candidates, what was supposed to be a period of recovery has instead become a reset.

One medical aspirant, the daughter of two doctors, said her family cancelled a planned trip to Japan after the re-exam announcement. Another student, Saylee Prakash, who was expecting around 680 marks in the May 3 examination, said her family had travelled to Singapore immediately after NEET.

"Two days after the exam, we left for Singapore," she said. "But as soon as the exam was declared null and void, we cut short our trip and returned."

One phrase surfaced repeatedly in conversations with students after the cancellation: "I had finally relaxed."

For many aspirants, that brief moment of relief now feels almost cruel in hindsight.

Eighteen-year-old Pragnesh Mehta from Ahmedabad had travelled to Manali and Dehradun with friends to celebrate completing NEET. Expecting nearly 650 marks and hopeful of securing an MBBS seat, he was midway through the trip when news of the cancellation broke.

According to his father, the teenager stopped eating, withdrew completely and had to be brought home for psychiatric treatment. He has since been prescribed antidepressants. "He keeps saying he has to suffer despite no fault of his," his father said.

Across states, students described the same emotional whiplash.

In Rajasthan's coaching hubs of Kota, Jaipur and Sikar, the emotional impact has been particularly severe. Thousands of students who had spent years preparing for one of the country's toughest entrance examinations now find themselves battling anxiety, sleeplessness, loss of concentration and emotional exhaustion.

According to coaching-sector estimates, nearly 37,000 students appeared for NEET from Kota centres alone on May 3, while around 60,000 students from Rajasthan took the examination.

Many aspirants said the exam had represented the end of years of sacrifice and pressure. Instead, they now find themselves trapped in the same cycle all over again.

In Gurgaon, Riya Sharma cancelled a planned family vacation and returned immediately to her study desk. In Punjab, Harshit Tiwari rushed back from a family trip to restart preparation. In Goa, Saahas Kumar cut short a stay with his grandparents in Mumbai.

Families that had postponed weddings, hometown visits and reunions around NEET preparation suddenly found their lives rearranged once again around the examination calendar.

On paper, the disruption appears logistical.

For students, it has felt deeply psychological.

"For months we isolated ourselves from family functions, social life and everything else," said Smita, a Delhi aspirant who has spent three years preparing for NEET. "After all that sacrifice, this uncertainty is mentally exhausting."

The Fear of Not Repeating Success

The cancellation has done more than extend preparation. It has destabilised confidence.

Students walked out of the May 3 exam convinced they had performed well. Now they find themselves trapped in loops of self-doubt, replaying questions in their heads, and wondering whether they can reproduce the same performance under fresh pressure.

"I had crossed the finish line," said Lucknow aspirant Aviral Srivastava. "Now the endpoint has suddenly shifted." That fear runs through nearly every student account.

Aditi Mishra from Lucknow says she constantly wonders whether she can perform "equally well again".

Sanvi, of Punjab's Bathinda, expecting 641 marks, said the cancellation left her emotionally shattered despite months of preparation.

Nagpur student Shravani Kurve, confident of securing a government medical seat, said the uncertainty had damaged her confidence more than the cancellation itself.

For many, the real challenge is psychological re-entry.

"What is harder than the exam is getting back into the same flow," said Nagpur aspirant Avalokit Meshram.

Across coaching hubs from Patna to Ranchi, students spoke of broken concentration, irregular sleep cycles and an inability to sit through long study hours again. Some admitted they now fear the retest paper could be tougher because of the controversy surrounding the leak.

Burnout, Panic and Counselling

Mental health professionals say that the emotional impact of the cancellation is far deeper than ordinary examination stress.

ML Agarwal, a senior clinical psychologist who has counselled students in Kota for more than 35 years, said the psychological burden of the controversy is becoming increasingly visible.

"We are continuously receiving calls from both parents and students," he said. "The mental pressure is the unseen cost of the paper leak. Students who seriously appeared for the examination after two to three years of intense preparation are feeling deeply dejected."

For some families, the emotional collapse has been immediate and overwhelming.

Aseem Jain, a businessman from Jhansi, said his son Manish broke down completely after hearing the cancellation news.

"My son was crying inconsolably after the news came out," Jain said. "We tried our best to comfort him at home, but he was unable to recover from the shock."

Jain eventually brought his son back to Kota so he could meet teachers and counsellors. "After speaking to them for a long time, he is feeling slightly better now," he said. "I will stay here with him till the re-exam on June 21."

In Jaipur, schools and coaching institutes have started special counselling and motivational sessions for distressed students. Lata Rawat, mentor at Cambridge Court Group of Schools, said 78 students from her schools had appeared for NEET this year.

"The best way to support students right now is to remind them that if they performed well earlier, they can do even better now," she said. "And for those who were not fully satisfied with their preparation, these extra days can become an opportunity."

Rawat said the school had planned motivational sessions to help students regain emotional balance before the re-examination.

Mental health professionals say the crisis unfolding among students is no longer ordinary academic stress. It is emotional burnout intensified by uncertainty.

Psychiatrists across Ahmedabad, Patna and Bhopal report a sharp rise in NEET-related counselling cases within days of the cancellation announcement. Symptoms range from anxiety and palpitations to depressive episodes, panic attacks and emotional withdrawal.

Dr Kevin Patel, a psychiatrist in Ahmedabad, said many students had already psychologically "released" themselves from the burden after completing the exam.

"Being forced back into the same cycle becomes overwhelming," he said.

In Patna, psychologist Dr Binda Singh described students breaking down during counselling sessions. "After giving an exam, children relax," she said. "Then suddenly they hear it has been cancelled. It creates double anxiety."

In Bhopal, psychiatrists said some students had even spoken about dropping out entirely. At government-run Gandhi Medical College, nearly 10% of recent counselling cases reportedly involve students distressed by the NEET re-exam process.

The emotional toll has become severe enough that schools and coaching centres in Odisha, Goa, and Jharkhand have begun formal counselling sessions alongside revision classes.

When Entire Families Orbit One Exam

The disruption has spread far beyond students themselves. In Kota, Jaipur and Sikar, coaching institutes have cancelled leave for teachers and academic staff as they manage the additional workload of NEET re-exam students alongside fresh batches. Institutes expect nearly 60-70% of students who prepared in these cities to return for the June 21 retest. Extra online revision classes, doubt-solving sessions and counselling support have already begun.

Parents say entire households once again find themselves reorganising schedules, finances and emotional energy around a single examination. The crisis has also exposed how competitive examinations consume entire households, not just individual students.

Parents described children crying uncontrollably, refusing meals, withdrawing socially and staying awake through the night.

In Ranchi, the mother of state science topper Shivanshi Sharma said students felt "emotionally let down" after years of effort.

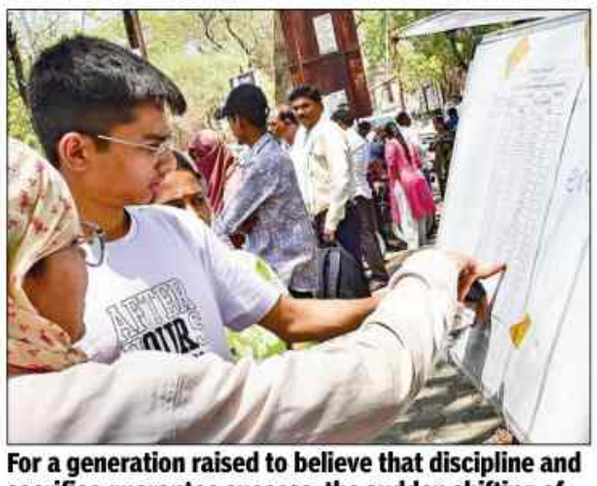
In Patiala, Jastesh Kaur said family life had effectively been suspended around NEET preparation — and now remains trapped there.

"Their personal and family lives are on hold," she said.

For middle-class families already stretched financially, the retest has created fresh economic burdens.

Krithika V, whose son took a drop year and joined a coaching centre after failing to secure a medical seat last year, said the family had postponed a planned Europe vacation. "He is back in coaching class, writing mock tests," she said. "The coaching centres are making a killing. The fee for one month of coaching is nearly 25% of the annual college fee."

Students appearing for NEET multiple times say the uncertainty feels especially cruel. Vinayak Garg from Bathinda was reportedly so devastated by the cancellation that he initially decided not to appear for the June 21 retest. His father, Rakesh Garg, said the family struggled to motivate him. "The leak keeps nagging at the back of my mind," Vinayak said. "I find it hard to concentrate."



For a generation raised to believe that discipline and sacrifice guarantee success, the sudden shifting of the goalpost has left behind a painful question: if years of hard work can be undone overnight, what exactly are students supposed to trust?

Arunima T.S. from Kerala said her parents had to borrow money again to extend coaching support after the cancellation. Many repeat aspirants, especially students taking a drop year, described the exhaustion of watching another year of their lives continue to orbit around a single examination.

"This is my third attempt," said Nagpur aspirant Archit Waghmare. "It becomes emotionally draining to start over again and again."

'The System Failed Us'

For many students, the anger stems not only from the cancellation itself but from the feeling that they upheld their side of the bargain while the system failed to uphold its own.

M S Srinivasan, an 18-year-old aspirant from Chennai's Triplicane neighbourhood, said the 2024 leak controversy had already shaken his faith in the examination.

"When I heard about the paper leak in 2024, I lost all hope in giving NEET," he said. "I started looking at alternatives to study medicine abroad. My father convinced me to stay."

He recalled being stopped at the examination gate for an additional passport-sized photograph and entering the hall visibly tense.

"But the paper was easy. I was confident I had done well," he said. "I never expected the exam would get cancelled like this. I am devastated and deeply disappointed."

Another Chennai aspirant, Shiv Narayanan Mahesh, described an examination day filled with complications and inconvenience.

"In a way I feel happy because I can give a better attempt at the re-examination," he said. "But I am worried the paper will be more difficult."

Several students now fear the retest could become tougher after repeated controversies. P D Archana, a student from a government school in Chennai, said even coaching discussions had never seriously considered the possibility of a re-exam.

"I have to hang on and give another attempt," she said. "If I don't make it, I will enrol in a different course and try again next year."

K Kudiyarasi, whose parents run a vegetable shop in Chennai's Koyambedu market, said she had prepared for barely a month and viewed the re-exam as another opportunity. "But many of my friends prepared since Class 11," she said. "They are all very upset."

Student counsellor Manickavel Arumugam argued that the present crisis reflects deeper institutional failures. "NEET has seen impersonation, question paper errors, evaluation errors and paper leaks," he said. "Had the 2024 leak been investigated properly, this would not have happened again."

He further added that students should have been applying to colleges by now instead of preparing for another examination.

Dr V N Alagavenkatesan, a doctor and parent of a NEET aspirant, criticised the decision to conduct a nationwide retest. "When authorities are not able to conduct a foolproof entrance exam, what is the purpose of NEET at all?" he asked.

Alongside anxiety, another emotion runs strongly through student accounts: betrayal. Students repeatedly asked a question authorities have struggled to answer: how were candidates subjected to strict frisking, dress code rules, and security checks at examination centres while the system itself failed to prevent a paper leak?

In Goa, students recalled being asked to remove metal zippers from their clothing before entering centres. "But what measures were taken to protect the exam system?" one aspirant asked.

In Delhi, students described the controversy as a "system failure". Smita, who has spent three years preparing for NEET, said aspirants were constantly reminded that the examination demanded extraordinary discipline and sacrifice.

"Yet the system itself failed," she said.

Many students now fear not just the retest but the broader uncertainty surrounding national-level examinations. "Even after giving the exam, there is no peace," said another Delhi candidate. "We don't know whether the process itself is fair."

Trying to Begin Again

Despite the exhaustion, most students know they have little choice but to return to their books. Libraries are filling up again. Coaching institutes have restarted revision marathons. Counsellors are attempting to stabilise shaken confidence before the June 21 retest.

Some students are trying to regain perspective.

Odisha aspirant Shagun Samantarai said support from teachers and parents has helped students slowly recover confidence.

Coaching experts across several cities say that they are encouraging lighter routines, supervised study sessions and peer-support systems to help aspirants ease back into preparation.

But the deeper damage may outlast the examination cycle itself. For many NEET aspirants, the cancellation has punctured a belief they were raised on — that relentless hard work guarantees certainty, and certainty guarantees a better future.

What students are grieving now is not just an exam.

It is the collapse of the fragile sense of control around which they built their lives.

Even a perfectly conducted retest may not repair that.

(Reporting by: Meghna Dhulia, Shoeb Khan, Litha Achari, Jamal Ayub, Bharat Yagnik, Neel Kamal, Bharat Khanna, Karan Sharma, Gauree Malkarnekar, Shivani Azad, Faryal Rumi, Diana Sahu, Shikha Yadav, Prithvijit Mitra, Rajiv Mani, Mohita Tewari, Ayantika Pal and Anjali Singh)

How a teacher in Rajasthan blew the whistle on NEET leak

One PDF, One Sleepless Night And One Man Who Refused To Cheat Students

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Exam day was over. More than 22 lakh students across India had filled bubbles, and chased ranks, cut-offs and a shot at medicine. Then cheating came knocking — as a PDF attachment on a phone screen in Rajasthan's coaching powerhouse of Sikar. One tired teacher opened it. Checked once. Checked again. Called a colleague. Sat through the night matching questions line by line. By dawn, NEET-UG 2026 was under a cloud. The examination had flunked its own test.

Around 6pm on May 3, the chemistry teacher returned to his rented room after helping prepare answer keys for NEET. He was drained.

Then came a casual warning. "My landlord told me, 'Sir, there is some PDF going around.' I checked it and was aghast," said the teacher, who has spent 13 years coaching NEET aspirants in Sikar.

At first glance, the paper looked suspiciously familiar. "As I matched chemistry questions in PDF with the actual paper, red flags appeared," he said. "Questions were overloaded. Then I asked my landlord to check whether biology questions were there too. As it turned out, there were biology questions as well."

Exam-season rumours are common in coaching hubs where panic spreads faster than notes before finals. He didn't dismiss this one. Instead, he picked up the phone and called a biology faculty colleague. Through the night, they cross-checked the leaked PDF against the actual NEET paper — line by line, question by question, answer by answer.

By midnight, the puzzle pieces had snapped into place. "The paper was leaked. I knew it," he said.

Around 12.30am on May 4, he walked into a police station hoping to lodge a complaint. Police advised him to return after compiling complete supporting material, he said. "There may have been loose ends, so I returned from the police station and continued examining the material," he said.

For the teacher, the decision to speak up carried a huge weight — lakhs of students staring at shattered timelines, repeated preparation cycles and another year under coaching-centre fluorescent lights

Back in his room, scrutiny resumed. Screenshots, comparisons, matching sequences — evidence stacked up like solved test sheets before results day.

By the evening of May 6, he had emailed the National Testing Agency (NTA) and alerted CBI. "By May 7, I had begun getting responses from NTA. The ministry of home affairs also got in touch with me," he said.

Then came a pause. "You know what happened after that," he said.

On May 12, NTA cancelled NEET-UG 2026 following allegations of widespread malpractice and paper leak linked to the exam conducted on May 3.

For the teacher, a decision to speak up carried a huge weight — lakhs of students staring at shattered timelines, repeated preparation cycles and another year under coaching-centre fluorescent lights. "I knew that lakhs of students who had spent two to three years preparing for NEET-UG would have their dreams crushed," he said. "They spent endless nights studying and compromised both their mental and physical health for this exam. I could not sit quietly."

The scandal cast a harsh glare on Sikar, one of India's fastest-growing coaching corridors, often compared with Kota for its swelling ranks of engineering and medical aspirants.

The teacher bristled at suggestions that the city's strong NEET performance pointed to something crooked beneath the surface. "Sikar has developed an excellent education system over the years — good faculty, disciplined preparation systems and strong coaching centres. It is wrong to blame Sikar," he said.

The teacher rejected the whispers that success itself had become suspect.

"Some people are suggesting that because Sikar performed very well in recent years, there must be something suspicious behind it. That is unfair. Sikar proved its mettle through hard-working students and teachers," he said, insisting the city should not become a poster child for a cheating scandal that cut across layers far beyond one coaching town.

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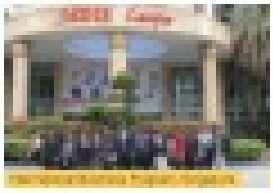

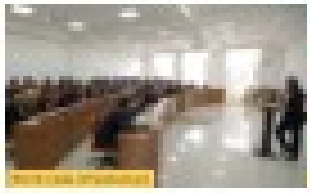

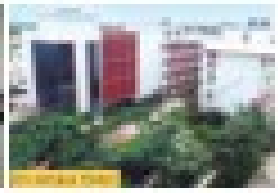

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Modi gets Sweden's oldest honour

▶Continued from page 1

In a special ceremony hosted in Gothenburg, Modi was conferred the 'Royal Order of the Polar Star, Degree Commander Grand Cross,' one of Sweden's oldest and most distinguished honours, instituted in the 18th century.

The award is Sweden's highest honour conferred on foreign heads of government in recognition of exceptional public service and contribution towards strengthening relations with Sweden.

Modi also highlighted the growing defence cooperation between the two countries. "Our cooperation in the defence sector is continuously expanding. The establishment of production facilities in India by Swedish companies stands as a testament to the fact that we are moving beyond a mere buyer-seller relationship towards a long-term industrial partnership," he said.

ANI

PM Narendra Modi sees a cultural performance during his reception by the Indian diaspora in Gothenburg on Sunday. Sweden Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson also present

The discussions also focused on strengthening cooperation in resilient supply chains, green transition, sustainable mobility, life sciences and digital technologies. "Prime Minister Modi underlined the importance of combining Sweden's strengths in innovation and sustainability with India's scale, talent and growth momentum to co-create solutions for the 21st century," said an Indian readout on the roundtable.

Diaspora gives Modi a Bengali welcome

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi was greeted by members of the Indian community in Sweden with a traditional Bengali welcome, which very much served as a reminder of his party BJP's resounding win in West Bengal.

Women dressed in Bengali attire accorded Modi, who was accompanied by his Swedish counterpart Ulf Kristersson, a warm welcome as he arrived in the European country. The PM said, "Bengali culture is popular world over and Sweden is no exception."

The two leaders also watched a Bharatanatyam performance by students of Lilla Akademien. "Glad that Indian culture is kept alive and is being popularised by our diaspora in Sweden," Modi said.

"PM Kristersson and I witnessed an Indo-Swedish musical orchestra presentation by Ron Davis Alvarez and his students. Music is a great way to bring our people together," Modi said. His aircraft was escorted by Swedish Air Force jets as it entered their airspace. TNN

India flags concerns over Hormuz at UN

United Nations: Targeting commercial shipping, endangering civilian crew and impeding freedom of navigation in Strait of Hormuz was "unacceptable", India's permanent representative to the UN, Parvathaneni Harish, has said.

Harish's remarks at a special meeting of United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC) on safeguarding energy and supply flows came days after an India-flagged commercial vessel came under attack off the coast of Oman.

Omani authorities rescued all 14 crew members of the vessel sailing from Somalia, but it was not known who carried out the strike.

In a post on X on Sunday, Harish said that at the UN-ECOSOC meeting, he shared India's approach to the recent energy and fertiliser crisis caused by the West Asia conflict. "A combination of short-term and structural measures alongside international cooperation are essential to respond to the crisis," he said, adding, "International law in this regard must be fully respected."

The attack on the vessel took place on May 13. At least two other India-flagged ships have been attacked since the conflict broke out. PTI

No fresh Ebola case in India since 2014: Govt

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New Delhi: As World Health Organization Sunday declared the Ebola outbreak in Congo and Uganda a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), Indian health experts said there is no reason for panic as Ebola does not spread like Covid-19, though vigilance and early detection remain crucial.

Health ministry officials said no Ebola case has ever been reported in India except one involving an international traveller who had tested positive in 2014 for the disease.

Modi's visit to the Netherlands secures 17 pacts

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi's visit to the Netherlands ended on Sunday with 17 outcomes in all, including agreements on migration and mobility, green hydrogen and defence cooperation. Along with the war in Ukraine, Modi and Dutch PM Rob Jetten also discussed the situation in West Asia, calling for freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce through Strait of Hormuz, while opposing any restrictive measures, and reaffirmed their support for ongoing efforts and initiatives in that regard.

"Both leaders expressed deep concern over the situation in West Asia, noting its serious implications for the region and the wider world, including immense human suffering and disruptions to global energy supplies and trade networks," said a joint statement, welcoming the ceasefire announced April 8.

Govt brushed aside questions from local media based on purported remarks by the Dutch PM on minority rights and press freedom in India. "We face these kinds of questions basically because of lack of understanding on the part of the person who asks them. You need to have more understanding of India to appreciate what India is," said MEA secretary Sibi George. He also said he had not seen any such statement by the Dutch PM, who went to the airport to see off Modi.

Official sources said the issue did not come up during bilateral engagements.

The visit also saw the two countries upgrading their relationship to a strategic partnership and signing an agreement to support India's semiconductor fabrication plant in Gujarat.

Jetten raises 2016 abduction case

Dutch PM Rob Jetten pressed India for the return of a young girl who was allegedly abducted by her father in 2016, when she was two years old, from Amsterdam and brought to India. "We also spoke about the case regarding the abduction of Insiya to India by her father," said Jetten on X after his meeting with PM Narendra Modi. TNN

Less than 1 in 10 energy sector CEOs are women.
Ours is.

Source: International Energy Agency (2024-2025)

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READER ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

South leads India's education race

With high enrolment and industry-readiness, southern states are driving the future of higher education

Akshaya.Nath
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South India's higher education story is not a sudden surge. It is the outcome of decades of steady investment, policy continuity, and a deeply embedded culture that places learning at the centre of social mobility. States and union territories like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are not only outperforming national averages across key indicators but are also quietly defining what a future-ready education system looks like.

From higher Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) to a strong presence in national rankings, the region has emerged as a magnet for students across India, drawn by a combination of quality, affordability, and opportunity.

LEADING THE NUMBERS GAME

The data tells a compelling story. According to All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021–22, India's GER in higher education stands at 28.4 per cent. In contrast, Puducherry records nearly 62 per cent, Tamil Nadu records nearly 47 per cent, Kerala over 41 per cent, Telangana records 41 per cent and Karnataka above 36 per cent, highlighting a significant regional advantage.

This gap is not incidental; it reflects systemic prioritisation. "South India's leadership in higher education is not by chance; it is by design. The high GERs we see are simply a reflection of a deeper societal belief that education is non-negotiable, that it is a path to dignity, independence and upward mobility," says K R Maalathi, educationist and founder, Auuro Educational Services.

The region's dense network of institutions ranging from public universities to specialised private colleges has made access both widespread and equitable.

THE ECOSYSTEM ADVANTAGE

"Students are not just looking for degrees. They are looking for an ecosystem that supports learning, innovation, and career readiness. Tamil Nadu, especially Chennai, offers exactly that—with structured governance, strong academic culture, and deep industry connectivity," says Golda Dilip, head of Computer Science and Engineering, SRM Institute of Science and Technology.

AI IMAGES. PHOTOS ARE FOR REPRESENTATIVE PURPOSES

WHAT MAKES SOUTH STAND OUT

1. **Strong Access:** Higher GERs reflect wider participation
2. **Industry Linkages:** Internships and projects embedded in learning
3. **Affordability:** Balanced fee structures and scholarships
4. **Curriculum Innovation:** Focus on emerging and interdisciplinary fields
5. **Cultural Stability:** Disciplined, inclusive campus environments

Dilip points out, "When I studied engineering two decades ago, internships were not even part of the conversation. Now, the whole educational format has changed. We see internships, placements and entrepreneurship all built into the system. That is what makes students industry-ready from day one."

LEARNING BEYOND CLASSROOMS

A defining feature of the south model is the seamless transition from classroom learning to real-world exposure.

"In my interactions with students across the country, many who move south say the same thing, 'There are more opportunities. We can focus better and the system works,'" notes Maalathi. "When learning happens in close proximity to industry, outcomes change. Students are not just earning degrees; they are building pathways to employment," she adds.

Cities like Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad have become educational hubs not just because of their institutions, but because of the industries that surround them—IT, healthcare, manufacturing and start-ups. "I chose Chennai because it offers both quality education and exposure," says Siddarth Jain, a second-year biotechnology student. "We start working on projects early and internships are strongly encouraged. It feels like you're preparing for a career, not just exams."

AFFORDABLE, FLEXIBLE AND FUTURE READY

Dilip says, "Chennai, for instance, offers a metropolitan advantage without the prohibitive costs seen in some other cities. This accessibility, combined with quality, is a major draw."

Institutions are rapidly updating curricula to align with emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, data science, sustainability, and public policy.

"There is a constant effort to stay aligned with global trends," says Dilip. "Curriculum updates happen every few years, often in consultation with industry. Institutions offer certification programmes in collaboration with major organisations, ensuring students graduate with relevant, market-ready skills."

Twinning programmes, semester-abroad optionsand interdisciplinary courses are becoming the norm rather than the exception.

CULTURE THAT PROMOTES LEARNING

Southern campuses are often perceived as disciplined, inclusive, and focused on qualities that contribute to a conducive learning environment.

"Higher education thrives where ecosystems are stable, opportunities are visible and learning is valued," says Maalathi. "Southern India brings all three together—not occasionally, but consistently," she says.

This stability, combined with a cosmopolitan student mix, has made campuses more welcoming for students from across India.

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Presidency School RT Nagar
St. Mark's English School
Presidency School Banashankari

CLOSE WATCH

Marcelo de Oliveira Souza, a scientist based in Brazil, has identified asteroid-inspired trajectories that could cut Mars round trips to 153 days by 2031, potentially halving current mission timelines using next-generation rocket technology

SCIENCE OF THE TIMES

QUICK QUIZ

An Italian luxury watchmaker recently unveiled a timepiece built using a dense, corrosion-resistant metal which is used to make nuclear control rods. This is the first watch in history to use this material. Name this metal. Send answers to **scienceofthetimes@timesofindia.com**

Breakthroughs From Around The World

AI CAN DETECT CANCER 3 YEARS SOONER: STUDY

Researchers led by Ajit Goenka, a radiologist at the Mayo Clinic in the US, have developed an AI model that spots pancreatic cancer up to three years before doctors typically detect tumours on CT scans. Published in the journal 'Gut', the study analysed 2,000 previously cleared scans and identified subtle pancreatic changes linked to future cancer cases. The tool correctly flagged 73% of early-stage cancers. "... it's mathematics. It converts that [scan] into a mathematical representation and extracts those mathematical features," Goenka tells 'Live Science'. Independent expert Tatjana Crnogorac-Jurcevic of Queen Mary University of London calls the findings "extremely promising" for high-risk patients.

'WATER BATTERY' THAT LASTS NEARLY 300 YEARS

Researchers in China have developed a non-toxic water-based battery that could last nearly 300 years, far longer than conventional lithium-ion (Li-ion) systems used for grid-scale energy storage. Published in 'Nature Communications', the study uses specially designed covalent organic polymers to create an aqueous battery capable of surviving 1.20 lakh charge cycles — 10 times the lifespan of a Li-ion battery — without major degradation. The researchers say the battery's neutral electrolyte, maintained at a pH of 7, is safe enough to be discarded directly into the environment. "The latest breakthrough aims to address these shortcomings with a chemical composition that is both nontoxic and highly efficient in the long term," the researchers write in the study.

Study Finds That Urban Cooling Remains Weakest In Poorer, Hottest Regions Of The World

Trees Cut Extra City Heat By Half, But Not Quite Where Most Needed

Seth Borenstein

Trees are countering nearly half the urban heating from pavements and buildings in the world's cities, but they're not doing enough cooling in hotter, poorer cities where it's needed the most as the world warms, a new study found.

When averaged out over all the world's cities, tree cover — by giving shade and releasing water vapour — cools an average of 0.15°C, according to a study in 'Nature Communications'.

Without those trees, the world cities would warm at twice the rate due to the urban heat island effect, where dark roofs and pavement absorb heat. The human-caused warming mechanism is distinct from climate change caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

Researchers built their analysis of nearly 9,000 large cities by measuring temperatures in 150 city sections each. That allowed them to capture cooling effects for cities and neighbourhoods so that trees in New York's Central Park, for example, weren't credited for cooling more built-up areas miles away in the Bronx.

Significant swathes of population in 31 of the larger cities already feel an average cooling from tree cover of at least 0.3°C. But study lead author Rob McDonald, a scientist at the Nature Conservancy, said poorer and hotter large urban centres that need it the most aren't getting as much relief from higher heat, which can kill by confusing the brain, shutting down organs and overworking the heart.

The scientists used a combination of weather station measurements, satellite data and computer models to see the cooling trees provided.

In 20 cities, residents feel less than five-hundredths of a degree from cooling trees. In Dakar, Senegal; Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Kuwait City and Amman, Jordan, there's such minimal tree cover the people living there essentially have no cooling from trees.

On the other end of the spectrum, McDonald looked at cities where tree cover cools at least 0.25°C — nearly half of cities in wealthy nations get that much cooling, compared to not even 10% in the poorest countries.

The list of places that cool the most is topped by Berlin and includes Atlanta, Moscow, Seattle, Sydney and Washington, DC, which have more trees. For example, Atlanta has 64% of its land area under tree canopy, McDonald said.

Wealthy areas in North America have larger plots and residents with more political clout, all of which contribute to larger tree cover, said Chris Greene of University of Dalhousie in Canada, who wasn't part of the study. "There's this inequality," McDonald said.

Thomas Crowther, an ecologist at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia, said every little bit helps. He's in a region where cities have nearly no cooling from tree cover, often because water is at a premium.

"As up to 75% of the human population shifts towards living in urban environments, these buffering effects of urban vegetation are going to be vital," said Crowther.

The study's authors said that cities, especially poorer and hotter ones, can and should do more to increase tree cover. But because of limitations in availability of water, land and proper species, combined with worsening climate change, at most they'd reduce future urban heating by 20%, McDonald said.

"Trees won't save us from climate change," McDonald said. "The climate scenarios are showing a much warmer world and there's only so much of that that tree cover can help with." AP

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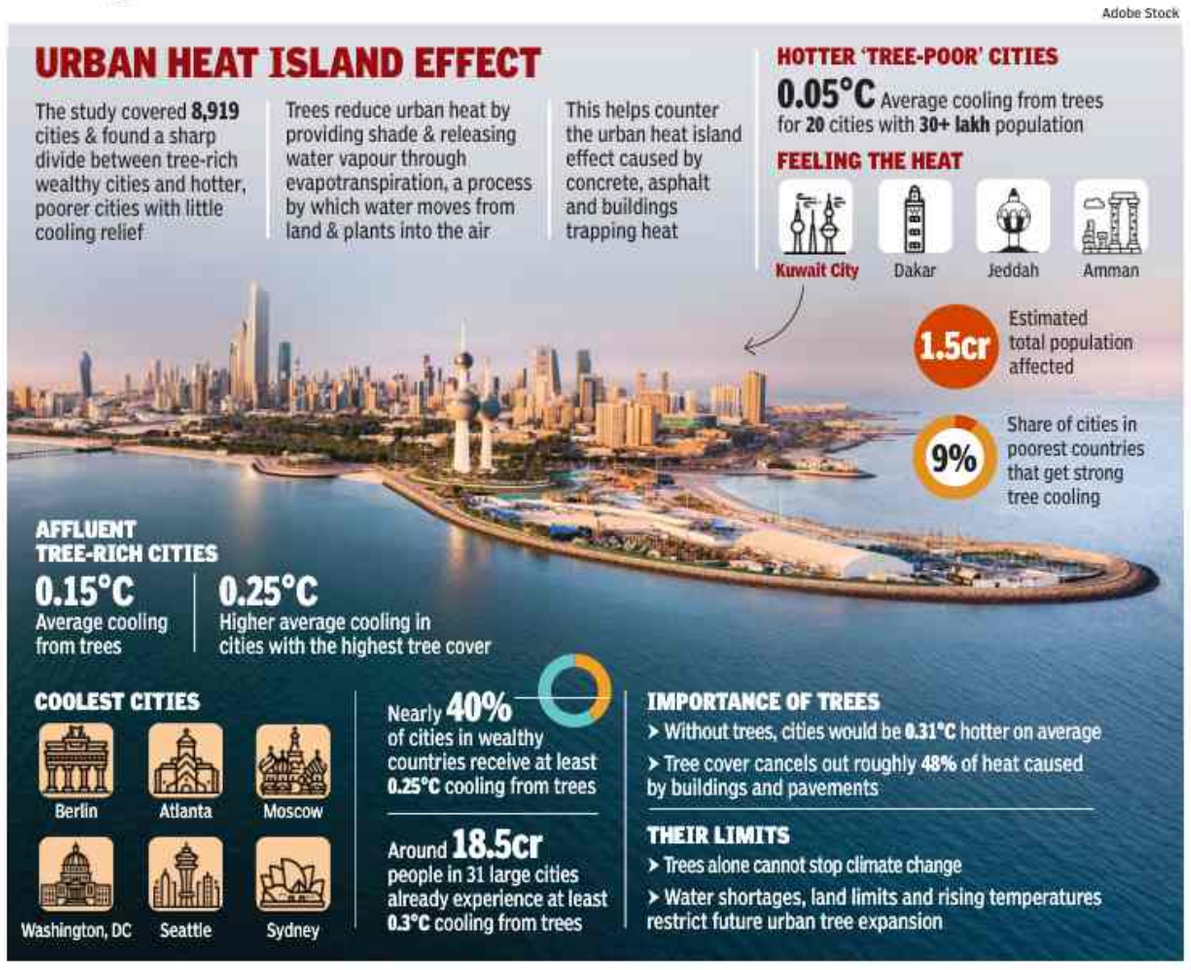

Long Summers Fuel Growth Of Algae In Remote Ladakh Lake

SwatiShindeGole
@timesofindia.com

Pic courtesy: Agharkar Research Institute

- Researchers studied sediments from Tsoltak lake, as well as algae & pollen, using electrical conductivity & carbon/nitrogen isotope analysis
- Stable isotopes showed plants dominated the region; pollen & algae showed how glacial meltwater & longer summers shaped these lake ecosystems
- Longer summers increase algal productivity, with climate-sensitive microorganisms flourishing in a once too-harsh environment

Longer summers driven by climate change are transforming a remote glacial lake in Ladakh into a living laboratory of adaptation, with microscopic algae increasingly thriving in waters once too harsh to support much life.

A new study on Tsoltak, a glacial lake situated nearly 5,000m above sea level near Chang La pass, found that rising temperatures and shorter frozen periods are fuelling biological activity in the lake. The research, published in the journal 'Limnology', was conducted by scientists from the Agharkar Research Institute in Pune, Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences in Lucknow, and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research in Ghaziabad.

Normally, high-altitude lakes that remain frozen for much of the year are "oligotrophic" — extremely poor in nutrients. But researchers found Tsoltak is becoming "meso-oligotrophic" as longer ice-free summers allow algae and other microscopic organisms to grow more actively.

"Winter snow and ice earlier controlled how long the lake stayed frozen. Now, with longer summers, the lake remains open for more time, allowing more biological activity," said lead author Priyanka Joshi.

Tsoltak's ecosystem is very sensitive to changes in temperature and, with extended summers, biological activity in waters that were once extremely low in nutrients has increased, the researchers say.

They analysed 40 sediment samples from the lake, nearby streams and seasonal pools, studying tiny algae such as diatoms and desmids, along with pollen grains that act as indicators of environmental conditions.

The study observed a rise in algae species including Didymosphenia, Cymbella and Diatoma, which flourish in clearer but slowly changing waters. Scientists said these organisms respond rapidly to shifts in temperature and nutrients, making them reliable markers of climate change. Pollen from desert plants such as Artemisia and Ephedra also suggested slightly wetter summers in the region despite its overall dry climate.

"These lakes are very fragile. A slight increase in temperature or change in snowfall can affect water chemistry, nutrients and life forms," says co-author Anjum Farooqui.

The researchers also found that biological activity in the lake depends heavily on atmospheric carbon dioxide and natural nitrogen fixation by microbes.

"This tells us that even in such harsh conditions, life adapts quickly," says co-author Binita Phartiyal.

QUICK QUIZ ON MAY 4 Our question: China recently tested a 10-passenger electric flying taxi capable of vertical takeoff and mid-air switching of propeller orientation. Developed for regional transport, what is the name of this aircraft? **Answer:** Autoflight V5000 Matrix

25001/143/2627

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR
(At/Po- Ambapua, Near Income Tax office, Berhampur-760011, Ganjam, Odisha)
(E-Mail: serwbpr2004@yahoo.com, Tel No.: 0680-2404287)

E-Mail / E-despatch

NOTICE
FOR PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH "e"-Procurement
Bid identification No. Online Tender/06-2026-27/PMGSY/BPR

The Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Berhampur on behalf of Odisha State Rural Road Agency invites the percentage rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of roads & Bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana **[PMGSY-IV (B-I)]** in the districts of **Kandhamal for 153 (One Hundred Fifty Three)** number of packages with estimated cost totalling to **Rs. 310.39 Cr (Approximate)** including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors registered with **State PWD/ CPWD/MES / Railways.** The registered bidder of outside Odisha, can also participate in this process, but shall have to subsequently undergo registration with the appropriate authority of the State Govt. preferably within a month of the deadline for bid submission, but prior to signing of the contract

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement. **Dtd. 19.05.2026**

Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and should be submitted online in **www.pmgsytenders.gov.in.** The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have a valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) original Demand Draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (a) (ii) of ITB with **Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Berhampur // Superintending Engineer, R.W.Division, Phulbani** on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive.

Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 10.06.2026 upto 5.30 P.M.

For further details and corrigendum (if any) please log on to **www.pmgsytenders.gov.in.**

Sd/- **Chief Engineer**
R.W. Circle, Berhampur

OIPR-25001/25071/1/26-27/0006

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No: B31/SE(IT)/EE(IT-1)/66247/2026-27 Dated:16.05.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through kpp portal Mode Only)

KPTCL invites bid against enquiry No: KPTCL /B31/SEE(IT)/EE(IT-1)/AEE2/66247/14/2025-26 for "**Supply, Installation, Training & Maintenance of 2000 KVA & above HT New connection Software and Hardware for KPTCL & ESCOMS**".

The bids will be received through KPP portal mode only. The detailed notification regarding the enquiry can be obtained by logging onto KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with the hyperlink **"E Procurement KPTCL"** or to **https://kppp.karnataka. gov.in** on or after **18-05-2026, 5.00 p.m.** Other details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/-, Chief General Manager (Technical),
KPTCL, Corporate Office, 11th Floor, Indhana Bhavan, A.R. Circle, Bengaluru-560 009.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHANDIGARH

E-AUCTION NOTICE

Municipal Corporation Chandigarh is going to held E-auction on Monthly Rent Basis in respects of Kiosk No.1 of Night Food Street, Sector-14, Chandigarh.

Schedule for e-auction

Auction Publish Date	Document Submission / Payment Date		Document / Payment Approval Date		Bid Start Date	
Start	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End
18.05.26	19.05.26	26.05.26	27.05.26	05.06.26	07.06.26	07.06.26
9.00 AM	10.00 AM	5.00 PM	9.00 AM	6.00 PM	9.00 AM	3.00 PM

The detailed terms & conditions of e-auction including eligibility and earnest money deposit (EMD) can be downloaded from the website http:/eauction.gov.in/2026_CH_188.

Helpline : 0172-5021521

Commissioner
Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh

25001/163/2627

E-Mail - sencrwangul@yahoo.co.in
Ph: 06764 - 236404

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, ANGUL
NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR ROAD WORKS IN ODISHA
Bid Identification No. Road Online AGL- 05/2025-26

No. 1671 // Dt. 13.05.2026

1. Name of the work : Road works
2. Total No. of work : 27 Nos.
3. Estimated cost : Rs.107.44 Lakhs to Rs.756.95 Lakhs(Approx.)
4. Class of Contractor : As per Annexure
5. Period of completion : As per Annexure
6. Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul	Road Online-AGL-05/2026-27	01.06.2026 at 10.00 A.M	20.06.2026 up to 5.00 P.M	19.06.2026 upto 1.00 P.M	22.06.2026 at 10.00 AM	Will be intimated separately

For detailed Notice inviting Tenders, Please visit to the website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Angul

OIPR-25001/25180/1/26-27/0005

25001/160/2627

Ph. 06670-235504
E_Mail: serwbpt@yahoo.com

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BHAWANIPATNA
Bid identification No.: BPT/Online-02/2026-27 Date-07.05.2026
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR ROAD WORKS IN ODISHA
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1. Name of the Work : Construction of Road works under MMSY Schemes in the District of Kalahandi and Nuapada.
2. No of Works : 47 Nos.
3. Location details : Kalahandi & Nuapada District.
4. Estimated Cost : As per NIT.
5. Period of Completion : As per NIT.
6. Cost of tender paper : Rs.10,000/- per set.
7. Other details :

Availability of tender for online bidding		Last date & time for seeking tender clarification	Date and time of opening of technical bid
From	To		
22.05.2026 11.00 A.M.	09.06.2026 5.00 P.M.	08.06.2026	10.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website "**www.tendersorissa.gov.in**"

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Bhawanipatna

OIPR-25001/25102/1/26-27/0002

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Office of the Deputy General Manager-1, BSWML, 1st Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru – 560 052

No:DGM-1/BSWML/TEND/03/2026-27 Date:16.05.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Only through GOK KPP Portal Only)

The Deputy General Manager-1, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited on behalf of the Managing Director, BSWML, Bengaluru invites bids from eligible bidders for the work. The details of the tender is as below:

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Approx. Amount put to Bid (Rs. in lakhs) Including GST	EMD (Amount in Rs.)	Time of Completion
1	**Mid Media Activities under SBM 2.0 With the following activities-Package-01.** Large Scale Events including clubbed with workshops, marathon, plogging, signature campaigns-Large scale events including clubbed with workshops, marathon, plogging, signature campaigns under Mid Media Activities SBMU 2.0	**166.44**	Rs.1,00,000/- through e- payment under of the following i.e., online / RTGS / NEFT / OTC and the balance Rs.1,50,000/- by Bank Guarantee/FDR issued by Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank.	2 Years
2	**Mid Media Activities under SBM 2.0 With the following activities-Package-02.** Large Scale Events including clubbed with workshops, marathon, plogging, signature campaigns-Large scale events including clubbed with workshops, marathon, plogging, signature campaigns under Mid Media Activities SBMU 2.0	**422.03**	Rs.1,00,000/- through e-payment under of the following i.e., online / RTGS / NEFT / OTC and the balance Rs. 5,33,050/- by Bank Guarantee/FDR issued by Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank.	2 Years

1) Last date for uploading Pre-bid Queries: **21.05.2026 at 17:30 hrs. 2)** Tender Pre Bid meeting: **22.05.2026 at 15:00hrs at above mentioned office. 3)** Last Date of Receipt of Tender: **29.05.2026 before 16:00 hrs. 4)** Opening of Technical Bid: **30.05.2026 after 16:30 hrs.** More details can be downloaded from website - **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-
Deputy General Manager-1
BSWML

DIPR/CP/JA//2026-27

25001/156/2627

email : se_nerwkjr@rediffmail.com

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE : KEONJHAR
eProcurement Notice for Road Works under PMGSY-IV Batch-I
Identification No. NCB-04/RWCKJR/2026-27
No. 2617 / Date : 14.05.2026

1. Name of the work : **Construction of road work under PMGSY-IV Batch-I in the District of Keonjhar.**
2. No. of Packages : **45 (Forty Five) Nos.**
3. Estimated Cost : **From Rs. 56.95 lakh to Rs. 994.74 lakh (Approximately).**
4. Class of Contractor (Eligible) : **'B', 'A' & 'Special' Class of Contractor**
5. Period of Completion : **06 (Six) - 12 (Twelve) Calendar Month**
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/O C.C.E., R.W. Circle, Keonjhar	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar	NCB-04/RWCKJR/2026-27	Dt. 22.05.26 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt. 11.06.26 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt. 10.06.26 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt. 12.06.26 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

- Further details can be seen from the website **www.pmgsytenders.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
R.W. Circle, Keonjhar

OIPR-25001/25177/1/26-27/0005

25001/166/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, RAYAGADA
Email ID-ccerwcrayagada@gmail.com

Letter No. 1567 Date: 12.05.2026

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING Through GePNIC
e_Procurement Notice

1. Name of the work : **Road works for the Year 2026-2027 (Total Fourty (40) Nos of Works)**
2. Class of contractor : **"B" Class & "A" Class of (Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authority.**
3. Estimated Cost : **Varies from Rs.103.49 Lakhs to Rs.385.80 Lakhs (Approximately)**
4. Details projects : As per Annexure attached.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bids
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Rayagada	NCB-03/RWCRGDA/2026-2027	Dt.22.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt.9.06.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.8.06.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.10.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

5. The details of works can be seen from the web site https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in
6. Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e-tender web site.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
RW Circle, Rayagada

OIPR-25001/25196/1/26-27/0005

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CONTRAPUNTO

The best way to destroy the capitalist system is to debauch the currency

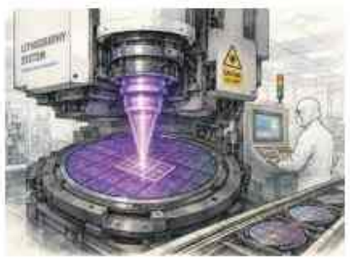
– VLADIMIR LENIN

Being Chipper

With Tata-ASML deal, India's finally getting into chip manufacturing, and in a big way

It won't be long before semiconductors, or chips, sold in a year are worth more than oil. Just last week, TSMC, world's largest chipmaker, said annual chip sales could touch $1.5tn by 2030. How many might be made in India? A few days ago, the answer would have been a clueless shrug. Now, after Saturday's agreement between Tata Electronics and Dutch firm ASML, it's fair to say we'll be a significant player.

Truth is, we are big players in chipmaking already. Only, not in the most obvious way, which is to manufacture the chips themselves. Our tech talent has a big role in the brainy job of chip design. By most estimates, 20% of world's chip design engineers are Indian. Early this year, Qualcomm acknowledged the contribution of its Indian team in the making of 2nm chips – currently the most advanced. We've also become big players in back-end tasks of testing and packaging chips made by others. Two years ago, we were ranked the third most attractive destination for these tasks, behind Taiwan and Malaysia.



The Tata-ASML deal, however, puts us on the road to actual chip manufacturing, the front end. ASML, if it's slipped your attention, is the *only* manufacturer of machines that print out circuits on silicon wafers. Each of which costs a few hundred million dollars. And Tata's plan is to invest $11bn in its brand-new chip factory at Dholera, Gujarat. But it won't make headline-grabbing 2nm chips, or even the 4nm type that's a smartphone staple now. Instead, it will make workhorse chips of sizes ranging from 28nm to 110nm.

That's not a bad thing, because bulk of chip demand is for these 'mature' types that have been around for years. For example, 2013's iPhone 5s had a 28nm chip. These older generation chips cost a few dollars each now, but are indispensable in cars, and industrial equipment. Their shortage can jam assembly lines. And as the big-name firms pivot to making AI chips, shortages of mature chips are looming. That's why China is ramping up capacity, and it's a good opportunity for India to make the leap, too. The fact that Tata has chosen to use 300mm wafers, rather than 200mm, to fabricate chips shows it's aiming for scale. GOI also wants 70-75% of India's chip demand fulfilled locally. That will save billions in forex, and quell any doubts about our chipmaking ambitions.

Protect, Don't Lecture

Himachal HC should have responded differently to a habeas corpus case

A man seeks Himachal HC's help, for a woman whose life he believes to be under threat, going by her text messages to him. Himachal HC division bench, instead of stepping up, and maybe hearing the woman also, packs the petitioner off with a morality lecture. Only because the petitioner was the married woman's live-in. And the petitioner feared her husband and mother-in-law detained her forcibly.

The two judges were least mindful that SC decriminalised 'adultery' (extramarital sexual relationships), in 2018. They ignored a married woman's perceived threat to life. The bench only saw a man in an "affair" with a married woman. HC refused to 'enter' a married couple's 'life' – "It is not for this court to intervene in matrimonial issues inter se the woman and her husband." It cannot be denied that the bench brought into their court a misplaced morality bias. It dismissed a habeas corpus – a very specific legal instrument to protect individuals from unlawful or arbitrary detention. This, when SC, in 2024, put out guidelines/safeguards for HCs to deal with 'detention' by those with family authority, following a case where a petitioner alleged that an LGBTQ+ person was being held by family, against their wish. In this case, HC glanced by that case. Instead, it said, "Judicial sanctity cannot be given to adulterous relations." Surely, a petitioner's relationship should not have so much bearing where threat to life is alleged? There is nothing that would stop HC from penalising the petitioner, if the case were found to be frivolous.

Why not, instead, put out a query about the woman's status? CJIs have repeated often that judges should desist from colouring verdicts with personal views, even in obiter dicta. But the judges barely looked beyond the fact of the woman's relationship outside of her marriage. To that end, they only upheld traditional retrograde views, not so much the right to life or dignity.

Once broken, consider sold

Two wise men have a little chat on Iran's Hormuz toll

Abhilash Gaur

Socrates meets Trump in the street…

Donald, you've been a father five times? "Yes." And what did fatherhood teach you? "To keep at it, hehe." No, I meant, did you learn something about responsibility? "Does it look like?"

I'm not making myself clear, perhaps. Let me try again. Donald, you walk into a curio shop with one of your kids, what do you do? "I know what you mean now. I pick up the little one, wrap my big right arm around their chest so that they can't flail their arms, and my big left arm around their legs, so that they can't kick. And you know, Socrates – what a goofy name, by the way – the brilliant part is that I tuck my own elbows in while I'm about it. I do it so beautifully."

I'm sure you do, Donald, but why? "Because I don't want them to break anything. Not a vase, nor a plate. Those places are a total rip-off. They've got little shiny things worth nothing, labelled hundreds of dollars. I'm not a fool, you know. In fact, I'm a genius."

So, if you broke one of those things, or your kid did, you'd have to pay? "Hell, yes, they've got those signs everywhere – 'Nice to see, good to hold, once broken, consider sold'." And is that a good rule, Donald? "It seems fair enough. If you broke something in one of my towers, I'd make you pay."

You're a very fair man, Donald. Now, what do you say about breaking Hormuz? "Oh, that's a beauty. We've pounded the ancient land of Iran back to the Dark Ages. They're so scared, they've been begging me, sir, please, please, stop."

Wait, Donald. Hormuz was always open. Then you came and broke it. Now the Iranians are tolling everyone who uses it. Who should pick up the tab? "I've said nobody should pay."

Well, they don't have a choice, Donald. People need to buy and sell oil and stuff. So, who ought to pay the bill? "You tell me, wise man." Isn't it obvious? By the curio shop rule, you broke it, so you pay everyone's toll. "Are you crazy? I can't do that."

Why not? Just UPI. Ships can paint QR codes on their decks, and your drones can pay as they pass. "No, no. I wasn't even there, nor my kids. I didn't break anything. It was Bibi."

Let The Rupee Do Its Work

Falling exchange rate can curb imports more effectively than austerity measures. Don't intervene in forex market

Gita Gopinath

Prof, Harvard University

India faces a familiar policy conundrum. A sharp rise in global prices of oil, gas, and fertilisers, triggered by conflict in West Asia, is weighing on growth while putting pressure on the rupee. To reduce the import bill and conserve foreign exchange, PM Modi has called on citizens to adopt voluntary austerity: commute less, work from home where possible, rely on public transport and carpooling, defer overseas travel, curb gold purchases, and prioritise domestically produced goods.

It is useful to begin by clarifying what is – and is not – at stake. India's close to $700bn in foreign exchange reserves will not run out because of higher imports. The only way reserves get depleted is if RBI decides to sell foreign exchange reserves to support the rupee. The real policy question, therefore, is not whether reserves will run out, but whether the central bank should actively defend the exchange rate.

Allowing the rupee to weaken has a key virtue: it works through prices. A depreciation raises the cost of imported goods and overseas travel in rupee terms, encouraging households and firms to economise on precisely those expenditures that strain the balance of payments. In doing so, it delivers – more effectively and more durably – the shift towards domestic spending that voluntary restraint seeks to achieve.

There are circumstances in which defending the currency is justified. Intervention can be warranted if depreciation threatens financial stability, reflects disorderly or speculative market conditions, or risks un-anchoring inflation expectations. But none of these concerns appear pressing in India today. Inflation expectations remain broadly anchored, and financial institutions are not significantly exposed to currency risks. Owing to improved macroeconomic frameworks, India is more resilient than in earlier episodes of external stress.

It is also worth recalling that there is nothing intrinsically virtuous about a particular level of the exchange rate. The exchange rate is a relative price, not a policy target in itself. Its role is to act as a shock absorber. When an external shock, such as a surge in commodity prices, raises the import bill, allowing the currency to adjust helps the economy absorb the impact. Attempting to resist that adjustment can delay, and ultimately amplify, the required correction.

Defending the currency is especially challenging in a world where capital flows are volatile. Exchange rates are often driven less by imports and exports than by global demand for financial assets. At present, with US inflation still elevated and interest rates expected to remain higher for longer, global investors have strong incentives to hold dollar assets. If, on top of this, the rupee is perceived as being artificially supported, investors may hesitate to hold rupee assets, anticipating eventual depreciation.

Such expectations can intensify pressure on the currency rather than relieve it. This is why attempts to manage the exchange rate too tightly can prove counterproductive. Allowing for flexibility in the exchange rate reduces import spending, raises export earnings and sustains capital inflows, all of which support the rupee.

A related issue is fuel pricing. Holding retail prices below market levels helps shield consumers from global price increases. But this comes at a considerable fiscal cost, estimated by ICRIER at about 0.6% of GDP annually. It weakens the very adjustment mechanism the economy needs.

Suppressed prices blunt incentives to conserve energy and disproportionately benefit higher-income households, who consume more fuel. Allowing prices at the pump to rise, as was recently done, encourages conservation organically, while targeted cash transfers could protect vulnerable households from the impact.

None of this is to dismiss the merits of some elements of voluntary restraint. Greater use of public transport and expanded work-from-home arrangements can reduce congestion and pollution – benefits that justify such shifts regardless of external conditions. Importantly, though, allowing for the exchange rate to depreciate and prices to rise will strongly incentivise the behavioural change the PM desires.

RBI, for its part, should continue to clearly communicate its framework for foreign exchange intervention, emphasising that the objective is not to target a specific level of the rupee, but to safeguard price stability and financial stability. This can, depending on circumstances, call for limited currency intervention in the future. This must, however, occur prudently, given the shock-prone world we live in. It will help to keep enough powder dry.

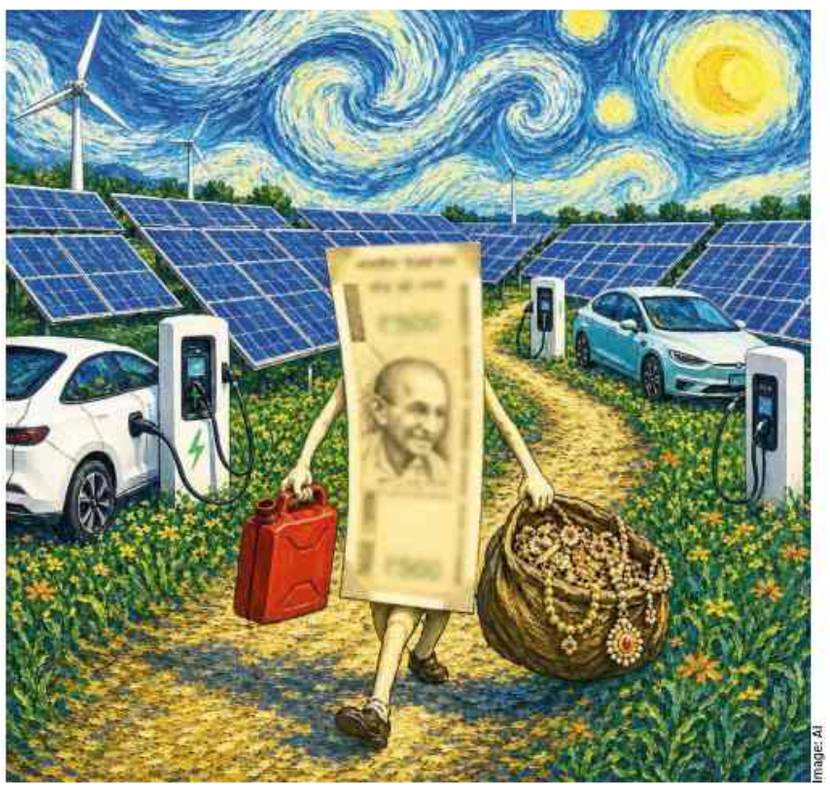


Image: AI

ENERGY WARS

Over time, as India's growth prospects remain strong, reforms deepen and help encourage higher levels of foreign direct investment, and renewable energy further replaces imported fossil fuel, the rupee is likely to appreciate in real terms. But at the current moment, in the face of external shocks, resilience comes not from resisting adjustment but from enabling it. Voluntary restraint is one form of adjustment. A larger adjustment will occur if prices rise and the currency depreciates. Let the rupee do the work.

The writer is Gregory and Ania Coffey Professor of Economics

Woo Investors, Go Electric

To increase resilience, massively scale up renewables, electrify transport, and make India attractive for world's best companies

Neeraj Kaushal

Prof, Columbia University

From an oasis-of-comfort to crisis-time *(sankat kaal)* in mere weeks? That was fast. Mid-April, GOI declared India an oasis of comfort and looked condescendingly at those countries responding to skyrocketing crude prices, triggered by Iran-US-Israel war, with fuel price increases, and mandatory shorter workweeks, to cut down their oil and gas consumption. India, GOI then claimed, didn't need to resort to such emergency measures. By May, however, deep in *sankat kaal*, GOI itself appeared on the verge of adopting some of these very same steps.

What happened? State elections? To be clear, the elections didn't cause the economic crisis, but just created a reason for the party in office to continue in the slumber of denial, and splurge with promises of welfare schemes to voters. Now that elections are over, BJP is back in governance mode – asking citizens to grow up and stop behaving like spoiled voters, frittering away precious forex on gold purchases, foreign vacations, and weddings.

First came Modi's nudge asking Indians to reduce dependence on imported goods, avoid buying gold, use EVs, public transports/carpools, cancel vacations/weddings abroad for a year. I'm all for nudging. If it works, it's better than crushing imports, or reducing access to forex with restrictive policies. Putting restrictions on imports reduces productivity. Imposing forex restrictions channels forex demand to the hawala market.

More ominous than PM's nudge was CEA Nageswaran's warning. There is a "permanent re-pricing of geopolitical risk across energy, capital, and commodity markets," he recently said at an annual CII summit. Meaning, even if war ends soon, oil & gas prices may remain high because the risk of disruptions in places like Hormuz will remain high, and markets will continue to add these risks while determining crude prices.

Likewise, shipping and insurance premiums, which have increased manifold, may remain higher, on account of the risk of such disruptions. Spot shipping rates on the benchmark West Asia-to-Asia route have nearly tripled, reportedly, since the war started.

Permanent re-pricing of geopolitical risk in the capital market could result in lasting increases in costs of borrowing, for countries like India, vulnerable to geopolitical shocks.

Some assurance: Previous oil crises – a few much bigger than the current one – document that over time, the global economy weathers these crises with resilience. Yet, CEA's warning underscores serious vulnerabilities. Addressing these risks requires both short-term strategies to avoid a balance of payments crisis, but more importantly, long-term strategies to build resilience and reduce future vulnerability.

Increasing prices of petrol and diesel was a key short-term fix. Another is to reduce fertiliser subsidy, in particular, subsidy on urea. We were, till last week, in a ridiculous situation where, while world crude price increased from $60 a barrel, before war started, to more than $100 a barrel, yet the Indian motorist was paying nearly the same pre-war price.

Oil Marketing Companies have not increased the price and their cumulative loss in the first quarter of 2026 is projected to rise to ₹1L cr. Leaving the price unchanged made sense for a few weeks. But the cost – of keeping the price below the market for the Indian motorist – was that demand-side adjustment would not take place.

Nageswaran stated GOI's top priorities are to manage current account deficit and prevent any further rupee depreciation. RBI is struggling to keep the rupee from depreciating. On CAD, while the situation is serious, we're not in any major crisis, as of now. CAD was less than 1% in FY2026, and under the high crude price scenario, it's projected to rise to 2%, which is less than half of what it was in 2012-2013, something that contributed to the taper tantrum.

Building long-term resilience to geo-political risks would require changing the composition of our energy sources. We grossly neglected electrification that would reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. While massive wind and solar energy projects have been installed in the sunny and windy states of Gujarat and Rajasthan in recent years, we have neglected investments in transmission lines, leading to energy transmission bottlenecks in these states. This has forced developers to scale back several gigawatts of generation capacity. Our topmost priority should be to invest in transmission. We also need to scale up our battery storage system.

Electrification of the transport sector is the need of the hour. Electric cars, buses, and trucks are cheaper to run, and reduce pollution. China is leading the world in electric cars and battery storage, yet, we have rejected proposals from BYD, the world's biggest electric auto producer and second-biggest battery producer, when it proposed a billion-dollar investment. Great Wall Motor's proposal for a billion-dollar project was also rejected. Nudging the consumer is okay, but increasing resilience requires opening the economy to the best companies.

The writer teaches social policy and is Research Associate at National Bureau of Economic Research, US

Calvin & Hobbes

Sacredspace

Nothing retains its original form, but Nature, the goddess of all renewal, keeps altering one shape into another… What we call birth is merely becoming a different entity; what we call death is ceasing to be the same.

Ovid, Metamorphoses

Rebirth Is Grounded In Reason & Meditative Insight

The XIV Dalai Lama

Among the Buddha's profound teachings, few are as thought-provoking or as often misunderstood as the teaching of rebirth. For those raised in a materialist worldview, the idea that life continues after death may seem implausible. Yet, for those who reflect deeply on consciousness, rebirth appears not only possible, but as a meaningful explanation for the continuity of life and mind.

Rebirth is not a blind belief. It is grounded in reason, reflection, and meditative insight. If consciousness is more than the brain's activity, if it is a subtle continuum, then it is not extinguished at death. Like energy, it transforms but does not end.

To understand rebirth, we must first understand mind. In Buddhism, the mind is not physical. It has no shape, form, or colour. It is luminous, knowing, and beginningless. Most significantly, it continues beyond death through a subtle stream of consciousness. Each moment of mind arises from the previous one. Just as today's awareness flows from yesterday's, the stream continues even when the body dies. Death is not the end, but a transition. The outer conditions change, but inner awareness remains. Modern science has made great strides in studying the brain, but the deepest level of mind – known as the clear light mind – lies beyond ordinary instruments. It is accessible only through inner experience.

THE SPEAKING TREE

The principle of karma, cause and effect helps explain rebirth. Our actions of body, speech, and mind leave imprints on consciousness. These karmic traces don't disappear at death. They ripen in future experiences, including future lives.

Why are some born into ease while others face hardship from birth? If life were a one-time event, such disparities would seem unjust. But seen through the lens of karma and rebirth, they become part of a longer continuum.

This does not mean blaming people for their suffering. Rather, it points to interdependence and reminds us that our actions shape our future. Karma is not fixed; it can be purified and transformed.

Buddhist teachings describe the bardo, the intermediate state between death and rebirth. When we die, gross levels of consciousness dissolve, and the subtle mind continues. In the bardo, consciousness is no longer tied to a body and is carried by karmic momentum.

This experience can be clear or confused, depending on one's spiritual preparation. If we cultivate compassion, wisdom, and awareness now, we are more likely to carry that clarity through death and beyond. At death, the clear light mind may arise. Recognising it can bring liberation. But for most beings, karmic habits guide the next rebirth.

While some may find rebirth difficult to accept, there is growing evidence to support it. Across cultures, children have recalled past lives with details they could not have known. Some cases have been carefully studied and remain unexplained. In Tibetan tradition, reincarnated teachers are recognised through signs, memories, and qualities. I was identified as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama. Though i retain few specific memories, i have met many teachers whose depth reflects lifetimes of practice.

Still, belief is not required. What matters is honest reflection. Consider the continuity of your mind, moment to moment. Such exploration can deepen your understanding…

As Shantideva wrote: "As long as space endures, As long as beings remain, May I too remain, To dispel the suffering of the world." Understanding rebirth expands our compassion. Every being may have been our parent, child, or friend. How then can we turn away?

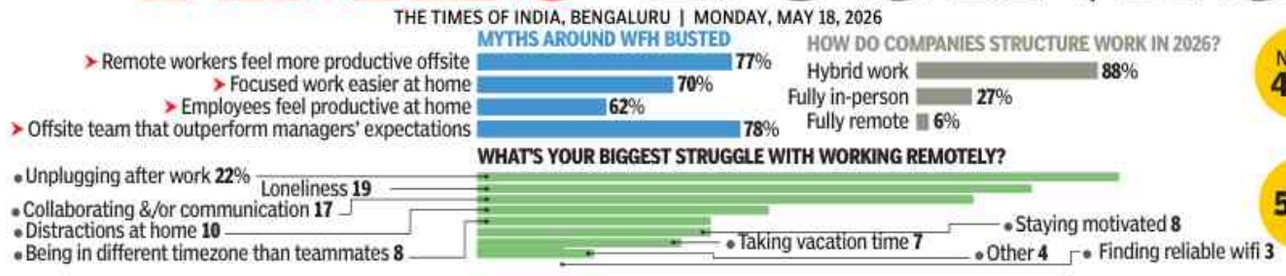
Even without memories of past lives, the view of rebirth shapes this life with patience, perspective, and hope.

As told to Rajiv Mehrotra

TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026

With work-from-home back in focus, a global survey across 40 countries has revealed that it is highest in North America and Europe, and lowest in Asia.
Post Covid, WFH levels have stabilised: From an average of 1.6 days in 2022 to about 1.3 days in the years that followed



22.8% of US employees work remotely, representing over **36 million** people

Nearly **41%** of the formal workforce in India worked from home fully and hybrid **until 2023.** By numbers, the figure was estimated to touch up to **to 90 million** by the end of 2025

55% of job seekers rank a hybrid schedule as their top choice. Research shows that hybrid teams are nearly **5% more productive than both fully remote** and fully in-office teams

Source: Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research: McKinsey
Source: Buffer

Prudential to buy 75% in Bharti Axa

₹3.5K-Cr Deal To Help Firm Deploy Wider Product Suite Across Channels

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: UK's Prudential plc has doubled down on its India plans, with the British insurer agreeing to acquire a 75% stake in Bharti Life Insurance from Bharti Life Ventures and 360 ONE Asset Management for an initial cash consideration of Rs 3,500 crore. The transaction will will hand Prudential both majority ownership and operational control, marking a strategic reset of its India business.

Following completion, Prudential's Indian operations will consist of majority-owned Bharti Life Insurance and Prudential HCL Health Insurance, and minority shareholdings in two listed entities, namely 35% of ICICI Prudential Asset Management and 22% in ICICI Prudential Life Insurance ("ICICIPru Life") which it will be required to bring down to below 10%.

Prudential has said that it will seek a timeframe for selling its stake in ICICI Prudential Life Insurance. In terms of the deal, Prudential will buy 60% stake from Bharati's existing 85% while 360One will sell its entire 15% stake.

The deal comes less than six months after govt amended laws allowing 100% investment in insurance allowing full foreign control. For Prudential, control brings the ability to deploy a wider product suite across distribution channels, combining its global underwriting and operational capabilities with Bharti's domestic reach and brand presence. Potential distribution arrangements with Bharti Airtel and 360 ONE could further deepen access.

For Bharti is signals a focus on its core telecom business, with real estate and food being the other segments it operates in.

"India is a strategically important and exciting market for Prudential... we are bringing together Prudential's nearly 180 years of global insurance expertise and Bharti's strong and growing local presence... to act as a catalyst for achieving 'Insurance for All by 2047'," said Anil Wadhwani, CEO, Prudential.

Bharti Axa Life Insurance reported a total premium of about ₹1,069 crore for the year up to March 2026, against an industry total of roughly ₹4.6 lakh crore, translating into a market share of about 0.2%. The company remains a small player, ranking in the lower tier of private insurers at around 15th position by premium.

The shift also reflects a broader industry cycle. In the past, foreign insurers had retreated from Indian joint ventures amid tight foreign direct investment caps, leaving domestic partners such as ICICI Group and others in control. With liberalisation, global players are returning. Allianz, for instance, has re-entered via a tie-up with Jio Financial Services after exiting its earlier Bajaj partnership. Prudential in its joint venture with ICICI was the first the private insurer to sell a life insurance policy along with HDFC Life.

For Bharti, the transaction marks a partial exit from a business where scale had proved elusive; the group had earlier sold its general insurance arm to ICICI Lombard. Axa the company's erstwhile French partner had exited before the insurance FDI was liberalised.

"We are delighted to welcome Prudential Plc as the controlling shareholder... we are creating a formidable alliance to tap into the immense potential of India's life insurance sector," said Sunil Bharti Mittal founder of the Bharti group.

WIN-WIN SITUATION

- Deal comes **less than six months after govt amended laws** allowing 100% investment in insurance, resulting in full foreign control
- In terms of the deal, **Prudential will buy 60% stake from Bharati's existing 85% while 360One will sell its entire 15% stake**
- **Existing resources** to finance transaction
- The transaction will **help Prudential combine its global underwriting and operational capabilities with Bharti's domestic reach** and brand presence
- **For Bharti it signals a focus on its core telecom business,** with real estate and food being the other segments it operates in
- **Shift reflects a broader industry cycle.** In the past, foreign insurers had retreated from Indian joint ventures amid tight foreign direct investment caps, leaving domestic partners such as ICICI Group and others in control

Stopped from holding meets, Tata Trusts weighs options

Reeba.Zachariah
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Mumbai: Tata Trusts is weighing its options in response to the Maharashtra charity commissioner's order restraining it from convening board meetings — including seeking clarifications on the directive, approaching the commissioner's office to argue that the order cannot apply as a blanket restraint on all Trusts, or challenging it before the Bombay high court.

People familiar with the matter said the order amounted to a sweeping directive against the dozen-odd Trusts, effectively freezing administrative, management and decisions the Trusts may need to take — whether on disbursement of grants to social projects or as shareholders of Tata Sons. They said the directions should have been confined to the prayers sought by the complainants and restricted to Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), pending submission of the inquiry report.

The complainants had sought reconstitution of the SRTT board in line with the amended law, which permits only one perpetual trustee instead of the current three, and that decisions taken after September 1, 2025 be treated as invalid. The Trusts intend to submit legal opinions arguing that the Sept 2025 amendments to the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act apply prospectively, not retrospectively — a position at odds with complaints filed by vice-chairman Venu Srinivasan and advocate Katyayani Agrawal. Trusts collectively own 66% of Tata Sons, with SRTT holding 24%. Tata Sons is expected to hold a board meeting next month.

The commissioner ordered the Trusts not to convene any board meetings until completion of the inquiry, warning that interim decisions relating to the administration, management or composition of the Trusts could lead to "further complications and multiplicity of proceedings." Trusts subsequently cancelled meetings that were to cover their nominees on the Tata Sons board and comments by some trustees, including Srinivasan, supporting a potential IPO.

Muthoot eyes ₹4,000cr from IPO, share split

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Muthoot Fincorp has approved plans to raise up to Rs 4,000 crore through an initial public offering of equity shares and a share split, as part of a broader capital-raising programme cleared by its board on May 16, even as the company reported growth in its latest financial results.

In an exchange filing, the company said the proposed IPO will comprise a fresh issue of equity shares of face value Rs 10 each aggregating up to Rs 4,000 crore. The company is the smaller of the two Kerala-based finance firms bearing similar names, the other being Muthoot Finance which is already listed. The board approved a sub-division of each equity share of face value Rs 10 into five equity shares of face value Rs 2 each, fully paid-up, along with a corresponding alteration to the memorandum of association, ahead of the proposed listing. The fundraising plan comes amid growth in gold loans in India. For FY26, the company reported consolidated assets under management of Rs 73,448.8 crore and profit after tax of Rs 1,847.6 crore.

'India's growth drivers firmly in place, banks cleaner than ever'

Mayur Shetty & Sidhartha | TNN

Mumbai: Veteran banker KV Kamath is now the chairman of Jio Financial Services, helping guide its expansion in a crowded market. Kamath, credited with turning ICICI from a staid development financial institution into an aggressive retail powerhouse, remains upbeat on India and technology. Excerpts:

■ PM Modi's appeal to defer gold purchases and conserve fuel is seen as a call to prepare for difficult times. What is your reading of the situation?

The 25-year growth trajectory towards Viksit Bharat remains intact. The underlying drivers—investment in infrastructure, urban transformation and the adoption of new technologies—continue to be firmly in place. These are structural in nature and are not easily derailed.

At the same time, it is prudent on the part of govt to assess emerging headwinds in a changing global environment and calibrate the response. The impact of current disruptions on Indian citizens is relatively contained when compared with those in several other economies.

In this context, conservation assumes importance at two levels. One is efficiency in usage, and the other is the prudent management of foreign exchange.

It is here that India's macroeconomic strength—both in terms of growth momentum and reserve buffers—provides comfort and ensures that the growth trajectory is not unsettled.

There will, of course, be near-term challenges, and these may persist until global conditions stabilise. However, they are unlikely to materially disrupt the broader growth path. The second dimension to watch is the impact on global production capacity and its longer-term implications. At this stage, there is limited visibility, and therefore a degree of caution is warranted.

I would view the PM's statement in that light—as a timely signal to sensitise citizens to the evolving situation and the need for measured, responsible action.

■ Govt has plans for a high-level committee to look at reforms in banking. What are your thoughts on the road ahead?

Six years back, post-Covid, Indian companies saw a huge jump in productivity and banks have cleaned up their balance sheets. I have never seen a banking system so clean in India and most parts of the world that I have worked in. Net non-performing assets, by and large, are less than 50 basis points. Mostly in the 25-35 bps level. You can't ask for better. Your credit cost is virtually not there. One issue is to see how this strength can be sustained. Second, they will have to look at growth which means they should be able to raise capital efficiently. Third, is technology, the use of AI is going to redefine banking. The fourth area is inclusion and finally, the role of institutions as banks, NBFCs and new age players will evolve and their architecture will have to be defined so that it is efficient and stable.

■ Are banks fleet footed enough to take on the challenge of the fintechs?

From a global context, banks are built on legacy systems — software, which was appropriate at that time. But over time, it became a legacy. Some pieces are getting replaced as there was some movement to the cloud. But after the cloud, you had open source where a whole lot of things could be built. Then came Saas followed by digitechs building their own systems. Post 1990s, there are at least three or four waves which have been opportunities but it is only on the surface they have been internalised.

Now in the last three to six months, we have the agentic wave. Today, for an institution to compete, you have to be native in what you are doing. Good news for India is, we have young people who can understand this.

We have the people who can implement this and we frontline people who can handle it.

■ When ICICI transformed from project finance to retail, a lot of the demand came from white-collar jobs in IT. Now we see that segment being disrupted by technology. Where will future retail demand come from?

We used to say for every white-collar job created, there are four other jobs created. My view is that because of where we are on our journey, we may have a change in the mix of jobs. We may not have the white-collar jobs we had 25 years ago, but the growth path will require a whole lot of skills where you may wear a blue jumpsuit or a dark blue jumpsuit and not necessarily a tie to go to work. People who will build India are needed. Our educational institutions need to see what skills are required and retrofit skills accordingly.

■ How do you see the debate surrounding private investment not picking up?

My belief is that corporate investments need to be tracked through the balance sheet. Economists tend to use bank lending as a proxy, but that has changed post-2021. A reasonably small company might have a profit of Rs 300-400 crore a quarter. Adding back depreciation, they are generating Rs 2,000 crore themselves. They don't need to go to a bank for a loan to expand. Most often, they are adding balancing equipment or increasing productivity. Unless it's a massive greenfield project like a steel plant, they fund through cash flows. The real number to look at is the increase in Gross Fixed Assets and Capital Work in Progress year-over-year for all of corporate India. Corporate India has learned to live within its own four corners.

'Smaller cos generating own funds'

"It is prudent on the part of govt to assess emerging headwinds in a changing global environment and calibrate the response. The impact of current disruptions on Indian citizens is relatively contained when compared with those in several other economies

"My belief is that corporate investments need to be tracked through the balance sheet. Economists tend to use bank lending as a proxy, but that has changed post-2021. **If you look at companies now, a reasonably small company might have a profit of Rs 300-400 crore a quarter. Adding back depreciation, they are generating Rs 2,000 crore themselves. They don't need to go to a bank for a loan to expand**

—KV Kamath | Chairman, Jio Financial Services

TOI IN THE CLASSROOM

Why Investors Must Keep An Eye Out For Portfolio Overlap

Sebi has mandated that schemes within the same fund house cap portfolio overlap at 50% for sectoral and thematic funds vis-à-vis any other equity scheme within the same AMC. Fund houses have three years to comply

Invesco Mutual Fund
An investor education and awareness initiative

For Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines along with the documentary requirements and procedure for change of address, phone number, bank details, etc., please visit the Education and Guidance section on www.invescomutualfund.com. Investor should deal with only SEBI registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified under "Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions" on https://www.sebi.gov.in/index.html. For any grievance / complaint, please call us on 1800-209-0007 or write to us at mfservices@invescoindia.com. Alternatively, complaints can be registered on the SEBI SCORES Portal at https://scores.sebi.gov.in

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

What Is Portfolio Overlap?

Portfolio overlap measures how many identical stocks or securities are common across two or more mutual fund schemes. While investors often buy multiple funds for diversification, a high overlap means they are effectively holding the same stocks under different fund names—defeating the purpose of diversification.

How Can Investors Check Portfolio Overlap?

Overlap is calculated at the individual stock level. If Scheme A and Scheme B both hold 5% in Reliance Industries, that 5% is counted as overlap. If Scheme A holds 8% in HDFC Bank and Scheme B holds 5%, the overlap contribution is 5%—the lower of the two holdings. This is aggregated across all common stocks to arrive at the total overlap.

What Is The Regulatory Mandate?

Sebi has mandated that mutual fund schemes—particularly sectoral and thematic funds (excluding large-cap funds)—must limit portfolio overlap to 50% with other equity schemes within the same AMC. The aim is to reduce duplication and improve diversification. Existing schemes have a three-year window to comply. AMCs are also required to publish monthly disclosures on their websites showing category-wise overlap. The overlap will be calculated quarterly based on the average of daily overlap levels.

Why Is It Important To Track Overlap?

Financial planners say tracking overlap helps ensure true diversification and prevents investors from holding the same set of stocks across multiple schemes. For instance, if five funds in a portfolio have heavy exposure to the same few technology stocks, a sector downturn can hit the entire portfolio, negating the benefit of diversification. High overlap also means investors are paying management fees to multiple fund managers for essentially the same bets. A leaner portfolio of two to three schemes with low overlap is often more efficient. Finally, high overlap across categories— for example, a flexi-cap or large-cap fund having a 70–75% overlap with a Nifty 50 index fund—may indicate the active manager is closely hugging the benchmark, raising questions about whether active fund fees are justified. — PRASHANT MAHESH

Cognizant, Capgemini slide into sub-revenue valuation territory

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Bengaluru: A tale of two companies: both Cognizant and Capgemini are now trading at market capitalisations below their annual revenue. It is a striking signal of investor caution toward businesses operating on mid-teen margins, a characteristic of the IT services sector that offers little cushion when growth slows.

Cognizant's market capitalisation stood at $22.3 billion as of Friday, down 22% over the past month and 44% over the past year. That places it near the lower end of the company's FY26 revenue guidance of $22.1 billion to $22.6 billion. Its full-year outlook factors in recently completed acquisitions, with 3Cloud and Astreya expected to contribute roughly 150 basis points to revenue growth. Capgemini tells a similar story. The French IT services company closed Friday with a market capitalisation of around $18 billion against trailing 12-month revenue of $22.4 billion.

AI-native challengers are no longer staying in their lane. They are moving into services delivery and exploring acquisitions in the sector, forcing incumbent IT firms to rewire their operating models on the move—while simultaneously navigating macroeconomic headwinds, softer client spending, and AI-led pricing pressure. Phil Fersht, CEO of HfS Research, said, "US investors are obsessed with AI and we're in an era where people-heavy businesses are not fashionable." He said investors are no longer rewarding firms simply for scale, cash generation or incremental margin improvement. Instead, they want evidence that service providers can reinvent themselves around AI-led, outcome-based models and eventually decouple revenue growth from linear headcount expansion.

Investors question traditional IT services models as AI disruption, pricing pressure and weak demand squeeze margins and valuations

"To Cognizant's credit, Ravi Kumar has stabilised a business that was drifting strategically and operationally a couple of years ago. But the market is still questioning whether Cognizant can generate sustained premium growth and materially improve its margin structure in an environment where traditional application maintenance and labour-arbitrage models are coming under intense pressure from GenAI and agentic automation," Fersht added.

Kotak Institutional Equities flagged a similar concern in a recent note. "Guidance execution now faces two additional risks — weakness in the healthcare vertical and macro deterioration. The midpoint assumes an improved environment in the second half of CY26 compared with the present, even though conditions have worsened over the past one to two months. This also assumes AI-led deflation has been sufficiently absorbed," the note said.

The brokerage noted that Cognizant's third-party sales accounted for 47% of organic growth. However, the healthcare vertical is facing visible stress, effectively leaving growth dependent on a single vertical. The brokerage also said margin pressure could stem from a combination of large-deal transition costs, AI investments, a greater contribution from third-party sales, pricing pressure in the core business, and integration costs associated with potentially onsite-heavy acquisitions beginning in the second quarter of calendar year 2026. In fact, an industry observer described them as tier-1 firms with tier-2 margins.

Salesforce rewrites roles amid AI shift

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Bengaluru: In an AI-led overhaul, Salesforce is redesigning roles across the company as it integrates AI agents into daily workflows. "Our focus has been on redesigning every job and reskilling every employee," said Nathalie Scardino, its president and chief people officer.

The changes are reshaping how work is organised within the company. "Traditional job descriptions no longer exist," Scardino said. "Work is now outcome-based — whether it's renewals, pipeline, or customer experience." AI agents are increasingly handling repetitive tasks, allowing employees to move into higher-value roles. For example, support engineers whose frontline query-handling work was automated have been retrained as forward-deployed engineers — a role created within the last year. "We co-created it with the team," Scardino said.

In sales, AI agents are qualifying leads at scale, enabling teams to focus on more complex and higher-value deals. Managers, too, are being retrained to oversee hybrid teams of humans and AI systems. "AI provides objectivity, but managers bring context," she added. "That human element remains critical." The company said it has spent the last two years building AI and data literacy through its internal "Agent Blazer" programme, which trains employees to build and deploy AI agents. "Today, 100% of people at Salesforce are Agent Blazers," Scardino said.

"Traditional job descriptions no longer exist...Work is now outcome-based — whether it's renewals, pipeline, or customer experience
Nathalie Scardino | PRESIDENT & CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER, SALESFORCE

"Beyond core technical skills, we're looking for AI fluency — understanding how to build and use agents, when to use them, and the ethical implications...Candidates now ask about access to AI tools before accepting an offer
Arundhati Bhattacharya | PRESIDENT AND CEO, SALESFORCE SOUTH ASIA

Scardino and Arundhati Bhattacharya, president and CEO at Salesforce in South Asia, attended Salesforce's annual leadership programme, Laulima, in Hawaii, where senior leaders had to independently build AI agents in sandbox environments and earn the "Agent Blazer Innovator" Level 2 certification to qualify for attendance.

"You couldn't attend the next management meeting unless you had become an innovator," Bhattacharya said, referring to the mandate introduced by CEO Marc Benioff. AI tools are also changing onboarding and hiring priorities, particularly in India, where Salesforce employs 17,000 people. The company said it is increasingly prioritising AI fluency, including the ability to build and deploy agents responsibly. "Beyond core technical skills, we're looking for AI fluency — understanding how to build and use agents, when to use them, and the ethical implications," Bhattacharya said.

Salesforce also plans to hire 1,000 new graduates globally as it reshapes its workforce around AI capabilities. "Candidates now ask about access to AI tools before accepting an offer," Bhattacharya said, underscoring how AI fluency is rapidly becoming a core expectation among new hires.

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026

THE GIVING OF LOVE IS AN EDUCATION IN ITSELF — ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

JAVIER BARDEM SAYS 'TOXIC MASCULINITY' OF TRUMP, PUTIN, BIBI TO BLAME FOR WARS: 'IT'S CREATING THOUSANDS OF DEAD PEOPLE'

NEXT 'BOND' MOVIE WRITER STEVEN KNIGHT HINTS 007 IS ABOUT TO GET SHAKEN & STIRRED: 'HAVE GOT LICENCE TO PLAY WITH AGENT'

'No tangible concessions' in US response to Iran plan: Reports

Washington Sets 5 Conditions In Ongoing Talks

Tehran: Iranian media said on Sunday that the US had failed to make any concrete concessions in its latest response to Iran's proposed agenda for negotiations to end the war.

The Fars news agency said Washington had presented a five-point list which included a demand for Iran to keep only one nuclear site in operation and transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to the US. The US also refused to release "even 25%" of Iran's frozen assets abroad or pay any reparations for the damage inflicted on Iran during the war which broke out on Feb 28, according to Fars. The report added that the US had conditioned the cessation of hostilities on all fronts on the start of negotiations.

The Mehr news agency, meanwhile, said: "The US, offering no tangible concessions, wants to obtain concessions that it failed to obtain during the war, which will lead to an impasse in the negotiations."

In its proposal, Iran had called for an end of the war on all fronts including Israel's campaign in Lebanon, as well as a halt to the US naval blockade on Iranian ports in place since April 13. It also called for lifting all of the US sanctions and the release of Iranian assets frozen abroad under longstanding US sanctions, according to the Iranian foreign ministry in a press conference last week. Fars said the Iranian proposal had emphasised that Tehran would continue to manage the strategic Strait of Hormuz, a vital energy conduit which it has largely kept closed since the start of the war.

On Sunday, Iranian armed forces spokesman Abolfazl Shekarchi warned US President Donald Trump against restarting attacks on Iran. "The desperate American president should know that if his threats are carried out and Islamic Iran is attacked again, his country's resources and military will be confronted with unprecedented, offensive, surprising and tumultuous scenarios," he said, according to state television.

AFP

The USS Gerald R Ford aircraft carrier, dispatched to West Asia, returned to the US on Saturday after a 326-day deployment, the Pentagon said. It was the longest deployment for a US carrier strike group since the Vietnam War

UAE calls hit on N-reactor a direct threat to its security

▶Continued from P1

The foreign ministry statement added that it "will not tolerate any threat to its security and sovereignty under any circumstances". "These attacks constitute a dangerous escalation, an unacceptable act of aggression and a direct threat to the country's security," it added.

During the war that began with US and Israeli strikes against Iran on Feb 28, Iran has repeatedly targeted the UAE and other Gulf states that host US military bases, hitting sites that include civilian and energy infrastructure.

Iran stepped up such attacks on the UAE earlier this month after U.S. President Donald Trump announced a naval mission to try to open the Strait of Hormuz, which Trump suspended after 48 hours.

More than five weeks after a tenuous ceasefire in the conflict took effect, US and Iranian demands remain far apart despite diplomatic efforts to end the war and reopen the strait, the world's most important shipping route for oil and gas.

Washington has called for Tehran to dismantle its nuclear programme and lift its hold on the strait. Iran has demanded compensation for war damage, an end to a US blockade of Iranian ports and a halt to fighting on all fronts, including in Lebanon, where Israel is battling Iran-backed Hezbollah.

The disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has caused the biggest oil supply crisis in history, pushing up prices. The US has imposed its own blockade of Iranian ports, and said that as of Sunday it had redirected 81 commercial vessels and disabled four vessels to ensure compliance. AGENCIES

AFP/File

The Barakah Nuclear Power Plant

Similarly, deputy speaker of parliament Hamidreza Hajibabaei warned against attacking Iranian oil infrastructure. "If Iranian oil is harmed, Iran will take all relevant measures that will prevent the US and the world from accessing oil from the region for an extended period," he said, according to the news agency ISNA. AFP

Measles kills 450 kids in B'desh; probe sought into Yunus' vax policy

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: With measles killing over 450 kids in Bangladesh since mid-March, a court order has been sought for barring former interim govt chief adviser Muhammad Yunus and 24 others from leaving the country pending completion of probe into the shortage of measles vaccines during his tenure.

Though measles is highly preventable with two doses of vaccine — administered from age of nine months — Bangladesh allegedly had a severe shortage of vaccines between 2024 and 2025, when Yunus was chief of the interim govt.

In his PIL, filed before Bangladesh High Court and likely to be heard Monday, Supreme Court lawyer M Ashraful Islam has sought directives for govt to investigate the role of Yunus and the others over the measles vaccine issue.

Health experts and doctors under the banner of 'Bangladesh Child Protection Initiative' have blamed the interim govt and the then health administration for the vaccine shortage that triggered the outbreak. They demanded that Yunus and former health adviser Nurjahan Begum face trial.

Moscow's oil refinery targeted in a rare strike

▶Continued from P1

The Indian embassy did not disclose the identities of the deceased or the injured. In a post, the Russian embassy said it "mourns together with the family of the Indian worker and extends its sympathy to those injured by the Ukrainian attack on civilian facilities in the Moscow region". "According to preliminary reports, more than 12 people were injured in Moscow, while in the Moscow region three people were killed and another six were injured," it added.

Residential buildings were damaged across several suburbs and Moscow's oil refinery was targeted in a rare strike, according to local authorities. Operations at all four Moscow airports faced disruptions from late Saturday but resumed operations before midday. Russian air defences shot down over 120 drones heading for Moscow, mayor Sergey Sobyanin said, according to Russia's TASS news agency. AGENCIES

Faced with war, crackdown against Baha'is rising in Iran

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The Baha'i community in India has been deeply distressed by the war in Iran, which has seen an uptick in persecution of Iranian Baha'is. Many Indian Baha'is originally came from Iran and continue to have relatives in that country.

With the Islamic Republic regime tightening its grip and brutally crushing any internal opposition during the conflict, the crackdown has been harsh on Iranian Baha'is, the country's largest non-Muslim minority community.

"There's a history of persecution of Iranian Baha'is that became a systematic state policy after the 1979 Islamic Revolution," says Nilakshi Rajkhowa, representative of the Baha'i office of public affairs. "Whenever there is a crisis in Iran, Baha'is are made scapegoats. The Islamic Republic constitution doesn't even recognise the Baha'i faith, and there was even a 1991 memorandum that called for blocking the development of Baha'is from all sides."

The Islamic Republic has long denied Baha'is basic rights such as access to education, govt employment, and even cemeteries to bury their dead. During the latest conflict, dozens of Baha'is have been detained, charged or prosecuted without due process. They include cousins Peyvand and Borna Naeimi.

According to Iran Human Rights, 30-year-old Peyvand was arrested on Jan 8 in Kerman. He was accused of encouraging other Iranian youth to protest, wasn't given a lawyer, and was reportedly subjected to torture in detention, including mock executions.

Borna was arrested on March 1 and similarly subjected to torture. The authorities extracted forced confessions out of the cousins under extreme duress for the killing of three security personnel, according to the Baha'i International Community and Amnesty International.

The most common allegation levelled against Baha'is in Iran is espionage at the behest of Israel. "This is complete nonsense. The founder of the Baha'i faith, Baha'u'llah, was exiled in the 19th century, and his final resting place is near Haifa in modern-day Israel. The Islamic Republic regime keeps linking Baha'is to Israel because of this. But modern Israel didn't even exist back then, it was part of the old Ottoman Empire," says Farah Motallebi, who was born and raised in Tehran.

"Last July, my mother-in-law passed away in Shahrood in eastern Iran, where she was denied burial. They had to carry her body 300 km to another city for burial. This is the consistent persecution we have faced for 40 years."

Another Iranian-origin Indian Baha'i, Romina (name changed), details her family's tribulations. "My sister was arrested and jailed along with her one-month-old baby in 1980. She also had a two-year-old child at the time, whom she had to leave at home all alone. My sister's crime? She was accused of teaching children – the Iranian regime treats Baha'is as ungodly, and therefore, they are barred from teaching, especially value education classes."

"Yes, the regime recognises Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. But not any faith that has come after Islam," says Motallebi. "Baha'is, therefore, are automatically excluded by the regime, making them easy targets for scapegoating." Romina adds, "Our faith teaches us to be faithful to the country and govt of our residence. Iranian Baha'is want to help Iran. But the Islamic regime doesn't see Baha'is as equal citizens."

AFP

Demonstrators hold signs during a protest rally in Washington DC on Saturday to condemn the execution of political prisoners in Iran

Taiwan prez: US arms sales a commitment

Taipei: Taiwan will not be sacrificed or traded and will not give up its free way of life under pressure, President Lai Ching-te wrote on Facebook Sunday, adding that US arms sales to the island were a security commitment based on law.

Lai's comments were his first response to the President Trump's meeting with President Xi last week. Trump said he was still considering whether to go ahead with new weapons sales to Taiwan. Lai said people were "very concerned" about the Taiwan content of that meeting. Taiwan would not provoke conflict, he added. "But we will also not give up our national sovereignty under pressure," Lai said. REUTERS

Masseur unrepentant, says a survivor; another one urges others to speak out

▶Continued from P1

Sentencing him after a three-hour hearing last Friday, the judge said Rastogi "violated women who were trusting, unsuspecting and entitled to safety" when they sought his services. "You abused their trust and treated them with an utter lack of respect and dignity when you touched them sexually and/or took images to capture parts of their body," she said.

"Every invasive image you took involved a gross breach of trust… When you couple that conduct with physical sexual interference, your conduct took on another level of depravity and insult to your victims." Matteo said she found it "somewhat remarkable" that Rastogi had been able to provide massage services at the parlour in Glenelg, on the western suburbs of Adelaide, without any professional qualification.

ABC News reported that the court heard how a psychiatrist had diagnosed Rastogi with voyeuristic disorder, which was a "clinically plausible explanation" for his conduct, albeit not one that could absolve him. "There is no suggestion that you were unable to control your conduct or that you did not know the wrongfulness of it," Matteo said.

Outside the court, one of the survivors was quoted as saying she was "happy" with the sentence and that other survivors of sexual assault should come forward. "No one spoke out sooner, everyone knew it felt wrong and we all left just thinking that was a bit strange, but no one actually said anything," the woman said. "If it doesn't feel right, it means it's not right." Another survivor said she did not believe Rastogi was repentant. "I read his letter, and it was all just excuses." Rastogi was given a non-parole period of 10 years and 10 months. The sentence was backdated to when he was taken into custody, making him eligible for parole in 2035. The court was informed that he is likely to be deported.

Ebola outbreak in Congo, Uganda an emergency of int'l concern: WHO

An Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda has been declared a public health emergency of international concern by the WHO, after 80 suspected deaths and nine laboratory-confirmed cases.

The WHO said the outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo virus, does not meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency but that countries sharing land borders with the DRC are at high risk of further spread. On Sunday, the UN health agency said in a statement that 80 suspected deaths, eight laboratory-confirmed cases and 246 suspected cases had been reported as of Saturday in the DRC's Ituri province across at least three health zones, including Bunia, Rwampara and Mongbwalu. A ninth case was confirmed in the eastern Congolese city of Goma, a statement by M23 rebels said.

The DRC health ministry had said on Friday that 80 people had died in the new outbreak in the eastern province.

The 17th outbreak in the country, where Ebola was first identified in 1976, could in fact be much larger, given the high positivity rate of the initial samples and increasing number of suspected cases being reported, the WHO said. The outbreak is "extraordinary" as there are no approved Bundibugyo virus-specific therapeutics or vaccines, unlike for Ebola-Zaire strains, it said. All but one of the country's previous outbreaks were caused by the Zaire strain.

The DRC-Uganda outbreak poses a public health risk to other countries, with some cases of an international spread already documented, the agency said, advising countries to activate their national disaster and emergency-management mechanisms and undertake cross-border screening and screening at main internal roads.

In Uganda's capital, Kampala, two apparently unrelated laboratory-confirmed cases, including one death, were reported on Friday and Saturday, from people travelling from the DRC, the WHO said. A laboratory-confirmed case was also reported in the DRC capital, Kinshasa, from a person returning from Ituri, the WHO said. REUTERS

Sherpa scales Mt Everest for a record 32nd time

Kathmandu: A Nepali climber dubbed the "Everest Man", Kami Rita Sherpa, scaled Mount Everest for a record 32nd time Sunday, while Lhakpa Sherpa broke her own women's record with an 11th summit.

"Today, Nepali climbers have once again written history on this glorious mountain," PM Balen Shah said, in a post on social media.

Kami Rita Sherpa, 56, first stood on the top of Mount Everest in 1994 while working for a commercial expedition. Since then, he has climbed Everest almost every year, guiding clients. Lhakpa Sherpa, 52, known as the "Mountain Queen", first stood on the top of Everest in 2000, becoming the first Nepali woman to successfully summit and descend the world's highest peak.

Kami Rita Sherpa(L); Lhakpa Sherpa broke her own women's record with an 11th summit

Kami Rita Sherpa, speaking in 2024, after another ascent of the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak said that he was "just working" and did not plan on setting records. A climbing boom has made mountaineering a lucrative business since Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa made the first ascent in 1953.

Nepal has issued a record 492 Everest permits this season, with a city of tents set up at the foot of Everest for climbers and support staff. AFP

US weighs drone threat from Cuba, claims report

Washington: Cuba has obtained more than 300 military drones and recently began discussing plans to use them to attack the US base at Guantanamo Bay, US military vessels and possibly even Florida, Axios reported, citing classified intelligence.

The report comes as tensions simmer between Washington and Havana and amid speculation that the US may be building an argument for military action against Cuba.

The development underscores the Trump administration's concern with the threat from Cuba because of developments in drone warfare and the presence of Iranian military advisers in Havana, Axios cited a senior US official as saying. "When we think about those types of technologies being that close, and a range of bad actors from terror groups to drug cartels to Iranians to the Russians, it's concerning," the unnamed official was quoted as saying.

Cuba has been acquiring attack drones from Russia and Iran since 2023, US officials told Axios. The report comes days after CIA director John Radcliffe visited Havana. According to Axios, Radcliffe warned Cuba against engaging in hostilities. AFP

Reuters

A billboard in Havana. Tensions are simmering between US and Cuba amid speculation that the US may be building an argument for military action against Cuba

Guj-origin techie held in US child abuse sting

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A US-based tech professional with roots in Gujarat was arrested in Florida after allegedly travelling from Texas to meet social-media contacts he believed were teenage girls, only to find undercover detectives waiting for him in a sting targeting online child predators.

Siddharth Sunil Kumar Patel, 41, a resident of Frisco, Texas, was taken into custody on May 14 in Lake City and transported to the Columbia County Detention Center. He was apprehended "without incident", Lake City police said.

Patel faces multiple felony charges, including use of a computer to "seduce, solicit or lure a child", sexual assault by a person over 18 on a victim under 15, and "travel to meet a child after using a computer to lure them". If he is convicted, the charges carry significant prison time under Florida law.

Patel's arrest was part of an ongoing Internet Crimes Against Children operation in which Lake City detectives posted ads on a website commonly used to arrange sexual encounters. Investigators posing as teenage girls communicated with multiple suspects, including Patel, whose digital interactions "revealed a clear intent to exploit children", the department said in a statement. Patel allegedly engaged in sexually explicit conversations with the undercover officers and then travelled from Texas to Lake City for a planned sexual encounter, police said. "Protecting children from individuals who use the internet to prey on minors remains our priority," police chief Gerald Butler said.

DAILY PLANET

AFP

Police work at the scene where a driver injured seven people, two of them badly, when he drove on a sidewalk in Modena, Italy, on Saturday

Bulgaria's Dara's 'Bangaranga' wins Eurovision

Eurovision 20026 winner Dara

Bulgaria won the Eurovision Song Contest on Sunday with Dara's catchy floor-filler "Bangaranga" sweeping the 70th edition of the world's biggest live televised music event and pushing into second place Israel, whose participation had triggered a major boycott. Bulgaria had missed the last three editions of the glitzy extravaganza but took the crown in Vienna for the first time ever, overtaking Israel at the very end as the points came in, with Romania finishing third. Singer Darina Yotova, known as Dara, was not among the favourites going into Eurovision week but the 27-year-old gained traction following a strong performance in the semi-finals, with her highly choreographed dance routines.

Flight diverted after man bites flight attendant: Australia's Qantas was forced to divert a flight bound for the US over a disruptive passenger, with local media reporting the man bit a flight attendant. The flight from Melbourne was headed to Dallas on Friday when it was forced to make a stop-off in Papeete, the capital of French Polynesia, due to the disruptive passenger. The man was restrained by fellow passengers. The man has been slapped with a no fly ban on all Qantas planes.

Bear mauls man to death in Bulgaria: A bear mauled to death a man at Vitosha, a mountainous region just outside Bulgarian capital Sofia, police told AFP on Sunday. "The findings of the medical examiner and a wildlife expert show that marks found on the body are those of a female bear accompanied by her cub," a police spokesperson said. Vitosha is a popular hiking destination being home to a range of wild animals.

No laughing matter: Colbert exit from late-night TV sparks fears for pol satire

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: American late-night television, that unique, risque institution where presidents are mocked, celebrities flattered and the audience applauds on cue, is preparing for a funeral. After 33 years, CBS is pulling the plug on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, with its eponymous host taking his final bow this week — ending not merely a show, but perhaps an era when comedians doubled as political opposition.

CBS insists the decision is "purely financial," which, as one wag remarked, may be true in the same way the Titanic had a "water management issue." According to the network, late-night television is bleeding money in the streaming age, with younger audiences migrating to social media memes, clips, and podcasts hosted by hosts broadcasting from basements and bunkers . Advertising revenues for late-night TV have plunged dramatically in recent years even as production costs have soared.

Yet few in America believe money alone explains the demise of the top-rated late-night franchise. Suspicion hardened after Colbert blasted Paramount Global – CBS's parent company – for settling a lawsuit brought by President Donald Trump, calling the payout "a big fat bribe" on air. Days later, CBS announced the show's cancellation as Paramount sought regulatory approval for its merger with Skydance Media amid scuttlebutt that late night shows had become politically and commercially radioactive.

In MAGA USA, comedians are now treated less like jokesters and more like hostile political actors. Trump has long viewed late-night hosts as enemies, attacking Colbert, Jimmy Kimmel, and Seth Meyers on social media. All three, along with Jon Stewart and John Oliver, have leaned into political satire after Trump's rise, turning monologues into prosecutorial summations. Critics called it liberal kvetching, but for fans, it was therapy.

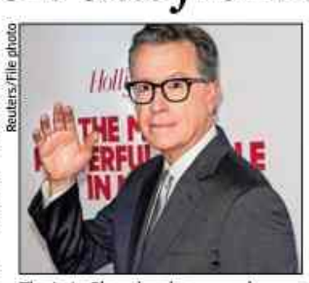
As the end approached this week, the late-night fraternity closed ranks with surprising tenderness. Kimmel and Fallon reportedly opted for reruns rather than compete with Colbert's farewell episode. They joked that Jon Stewart, who was not with them, was a "designated survivor."

Colbert himself has alternated between gallows humour and visible bitterness, noting with some disbelief that his staff would be cleared out immediately after the final show. And what next for the 62-year-old host? Amid reports that he will be co-writing a Lord of the Rings film with his son Peter, he is also expected to migrate to streaming and podcasting.

India, interestingly, has often featured in Colbert's comic universe. During Trump-era outsourcing anxieties, he once joked that American jobs were "being sent to a call centre in Bengaluru where even the scam calls have better customer service." He often ribbed Indian-Americans for their academic nous, joking that spelling-bee champions sounded "less like children and more like junior tax consultants." When PM Modi visited the US, he quipped that Trump and his bonding over big rallies was "the geopolitical version of two DJs comparing crowd sizes."

As political polarisation deepens globally, comedians on both sides of the world are discovering that satire now comes with legal notices, troll armies, and ideological surveillance. Indian stand-up comics know this pressure. America's late-nighters are only now discovering what they have long understood: power laughs loudest at jokes aimed downward, not upward. Late-night television once promised Americans catharsis before bedtime. Soon it will be the morning after.

Reuters/File photo



The Late Show has been running since 1993 with David Letterman as its host. Stephen Colbert (in pic) succeeded him in 2015

ECOLINK

TIMES SPORT
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026

ECOLINK

RUTHLESS RCB SOAR INTO PLAYOFFS

Defending Champs Romp Past Kings To Hand Iyer's Men Sixth Defeat In A Row

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Dharamshala: It is often advised to conserve your breath at higher altitudes where the air is more rarefied. But it doesn't apply when you have an ultra-motivated and hyper-energetic Virat Kohli egging your team to scale greater heights. In the mountains of Dharamshala on Sunday afternoon, Royal Challengers Bengaluru soared into the playoffs with a clinical 23-run win, leaving the Punjab Kings gasping for breath to stay alive in the IPL.

Kohli set the tone for his team without its regular captain Rajat Patidar due to injury. Kohli's energy can be infectious for his teammates and the overwhelming pres-

IPL

ence can weigh the opposition down mentally. The script played out just like Kohli wanted. His 58 off 37 may not come across as the standout performance on paper. Yet, that knock was the bedrock for Devdutt Padikkal's 25-ball 40 and Venkatesh Iyer's unbeaten 73 off 40 balls as RCB posted 222/4.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar maintained the momentum with another skillful spell with the new ball to expose the technical frailties of a modern T20 opener. By dismissing the deadly opening pair of Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh inside the first three overs of the chase, Bhuvneshwar tied

Reuters

MEN OF THE MOMENT: Virat Kohli and Venkatesh Iyer

leash on Punjab Kings' pursuit. Soon, captain Shreyas Iyer's defensive technique was exposed by Rasikh Salam's gentle outswinger and the chase was reeling at 19/3 in the fourth over.

Kohli never let the tempo drop during his stay at the crease, animatedly buoying his batting partners. The fist bumps felt harder. The frequent stares into the bowlers' eyes were intimidating. Sledging Kings' best bowler Harpreet Brar was an exemplary mind game. And then the scampering around the field coupled with rocket throws from the outfield, when Shashank Singh and Marcus Stoinis briefly threatened to script a remarkable comeback, sent a clear message to his team and the opponents — there can't be any letup on the day.

Kohli and RCB turned up with one clear objective — become the first team to seal the last-four berth in the competition. That's what champion teams do. They play to dominate. That's exactly what Shreyas Iyer's Punjab Kings failed to do when they appeared invincible halfway through the tournament. It's also remarkable how a campaign that looked like a walk in the park for Kings has suddenly become a drag in the mud. It's down to the number game for Punjab Kings with one match remaining on the back of six consecutive defeats.

By the end of the RCB innings, Punjab Kings fielders appeared like dead flies as the ball travelled past the boundary with very little resistance. In the 40 overs of play, RCB showed how they have only grown as defending champions. The big names stepped up and let the younger boys fly. Venkatesh Iyer and Padikkal appeared to be merely chipping sixes as Kohli held one end firm. Bhuvneshwar and Josh Hazlewood delivered exceptional overs just when Punjab Kings thought they found some momentum through Shashank's 27-ball 56-run onslaught to leave young Rasikh 33 runs to defend in the final over.

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
RCB	13	9	4	0	1.065	18
GT	13	8	5	0	0.400	16
SRH	12	7	5	0	0.331	14
PBKS	13	6	6	1	0.227	13
CSK	12	6	6	0	0.027	12
RR	12	6	6	0	0.027	12
DC	13	6	7	0	-0.871	12
KKR	12	5	6	1	-0.038	11
MI	12	4	8	0	-0.504	8
LSG	12	4	8	0	-0.701	8

SCOREBOARD

RCB: Jacob Bethell b Brar 11, Virat Kohli c Arya b Chahal 58, Devdutt Padikkal c Iyer b Brar 45, Venkatesh Iyer 73 (not out), Tim David c Brar b Arshdeep 28. **Extras:** (B-1, NB-1, W-5) 7. **Total: (4 wkts, 20 overs) 222.** **Fall of wickets**: 1-21, 2-97, 3-157, 4-222. **Bowling:** Arshdeep Singh 4-0-43-1, Azmatullah Omarzai 4-0-38-0, Harpreet Brar 4-0-35-2, Lockie Ferguson 3-0-43-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 3-0-42-1, Shashank Singh 2-0-20-0.

PBKS: Priyansh Arya c Shepherd b Kumar 0, Prabhsimran Singh c Padikkal b Kumar 2, Cooper Connolly c Bethell b Shepherd 37, Shreyas Iyer c Jitesh b Rasikh 1, Suryansh Shedge c Kohli b Suyash 35, Marcus Stoinis lbw b Hazlewood 37, Shashank Singh c Kohli b Rasikh 56, Azmatullah Omarzai c David b Rasikh 14, Harpreet Brar 5 (not out). **Extras:** (LB-4, W-8) 12. **Total: (For 8 wkts, 20 overs) 199** **Fall of wickets:** 1-1, 2-18, 3-19, 4-62, 5-93, 6-160, 7-194, 8-199. **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-38-2, Josh Hazlewood 4-0-36-1, Rasikh Salam 4-0-36-3, Suyash Sharma 4-0-50-1, Romario Shepherd 1-0-8-1, Krunal Pandya 3-0-27-0.

All-round Capitals stay afloat with win over RR

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New Delhi: Delhi Capitals are not ready to throw in the towel just yet as they hang on to their playoff qualification hopes by a thread.

On the back of a superb bowling performance from Mitchell Starc and half-centuries from KL Rahul and Abishek Porel, the Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by five wickets here on Sunday.

A hat-trick of defeats has now put Royals in a must-win situation in the remaining two games. Royals seemed to miss the services of their premium allrounder Ravindra Jadeja, who was surprisingly benched for the crucial match against Capitals, citing 'load management'.

Starc's outstanding late four-wicket burst helped the Capitals claw their way back into the game as they restricted Royals to 193 for eight after the visitors got off to a rollicking start.

Rahul and Porel then put Capitals on the road to victory with a century opening stand. They were aided by some wayward bowling by the Royals bowlers in the Powerplay while Yash Raj Punja flooring a sitter off Rahul, when the batsman was on zero, didn't help matters.

Not one to be intimidated by Jofra Archer, Porel used the pace of the quickie to whip the ball out of the stadium for a six early in the Capi-

PTI

FOUR STAR: Delhi Capitals' Mitchell Starc (centre) and teammates celebrate the wicket of Riyan Parag

tals chase. With Rahul too joining the party with some exquisite shots, Delhi Capitals raced to 72 without loss in the Powerplay. Porel was dismissed for 53 off 31 balls while Rahul too couldn't carry on after his half-century as he was out for 56 off 42 balls.

Earlier, Royals couldn't capitalise on their explosive start as Starc used all his experience to bring Capitals back into the game.

After Vaibhav Sooryavanshi set the tone with a quickfire 46 off 21 balls, skipper Riyan Parag hit an explosive 51 from 26 balls as Royals looked charging towards an imposing total.

Despite scoring a 40-ball 53, Dhruv Jurel failed to provide the innings the final flourish as Royals lost their momentum after the dismissal of Parag and had to be content with a total of 193/8.

Brief scores: Rajasthan Royals: 193/8 in 20 overs (Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 46, Dhruv Jurel 53, Riyan Parag 51; Lungi Ngidi 2-24, Madhav Tiwari 2-27, Mitchell Starc 4-40) **lost to Delhi Capitals: 197/5 in 19.2 overs** (Abishek Porel 51, KL Rahul 56, Axar Patel 34 n.o; Jofra Archer 2-35, Brijesh Sharma 2-44).

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Chepauk test for 'TRAVI-SHEK'

Hosts CSK Chase Playoff Lifeline As SRH Come Calling

Photos: IANS & BA Raju

MARCH ON: Sunrisers Hyderabad's Travis Head and Heinrich Klaasen during training

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Chennai: It's knock-out cricket already for Chennai Super Kings, with two league games left and no margin for error. For Sunrisers Hyderabad, the equation is less desperate but hardly comfortable: seven wins have them within touching distance of the playoffs, yet a defeat at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Monday could leave qualification hanging in the balance.

When the teams met earlier this season, it was SRH's explosive opening pair Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma, who dictated terms. The duo blasted 75 runs in just 5.5 overs, setting up a platform that eventually proved decisive despite CSK's spirited fightback. Stopping that early surge has become central to CSK's plans, particularly given their own struggles in the powerplay. Even in their most recent loss to Lucknow Super Giants, CSK were outplayed in both phases of the first six overs — most critically with the ball — a factor that ultimately took them out of the contest.

PREVIEW

CSK pacer Spencer Johnson underlined the importance of controlling that phase, especially against a pairing as destructive as Head and Abhishek. "You may not win the match in the powerplay, but you can lose it there. We know the quality we are up against and we are preparing accordingly," he said.

The Super Kings will take some comfort from returning to Chepauk, where conditions could aid their plans. Unlike the flatter Hyderabad pitch, the Chennai surface is expected to offer slightly more bounce and assistance to bowlers. Johnson believes that familiarity could help CSK counter SRH's openers more effectively this time.

A key tactical ploy could be the use of left-arm options. CSK boast a trio of left-arm pacers in Johnson, Mukesh Choudhary and Gurjapneet Singh, all capable of angling the ball away from the left-handed opening pair. Add to that the presence of left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein — particularly effective in the powerplay — and CSK have multiple avenues to disrupt SRH's early momentum.

Abhishek, notably, has shown some vulnerability against spin in the first six overs — an area CSK will be keen to exploit.

However, SRH's batting is far from a two-man show. Heinrich Klaasen has been one of the standout performers this season, anchoring the middle and finishing phases with remarkable consistency. Ishan Kishan, though inconsistent, remains a dangerous presence capable of rapid acceleration.

SRH bowling coach Varun Aaron was unequivocal about Klaasen's value. "He has been one of the best T20 batters in the last 7-8 years and is the fulcrum of our batting," Aaron said, highlighting his importance through the middle overs. For CSK, the task is clear: contain SRH's firepower, especially up front, and keep their playoff hopes alive. For SRH, another win could practically seal passage. At Chepauk, the contest may ultimately hinge on who wins that decisive early battle.

TODAY'S FACE-OFF
CSK vs SRH
TV TIME: 7.30 PM
STAR SPORTS
JIOHOTSTAR

HEAD TO HEAD

CSK	SRH
15	8

LAST FIVE MATCHES

CSK	L	W	W	W	L
SRH	L	W	L	W	W

VENUE: CHENNAI

NUMBERS GAME

5 Chennai Super Kings have won five — the first five in succession between 2013 & 2024 — and lost one out of the six matches played vs Sunrisers Hyderabad at Chepauk. Sunrisers only win vs CSK at this venue was in the last match played in 2025.

4/27 Career-best IPL figures for Mukesh Choudhary were recorded for CSK vs SRH at Chennai on April 28, 2024. Harshal Patel remains the only SRH bowler to produce a four-wicket haul vs CSK in the IPL — 4/28 at Chennai on April 25, 2025. **Stats: Rajesh Kumar**

'Told Ruturaj he is free not to take a single advice of mine'

Just Wanted To Be Authentic; People Pick Up Stuff That They Love About You: MSD On Cult Following By CSK Faithful

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Chennai: There's a lot of anticipation whether MS Dhoni will be seen in action for one last time at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Monday. He

LEGEND SPEAKS

came in late for practice on Sunday, got padded up, did a bit of warm-up and headed straight to the nets, hitting those huge sixes we are so used to seeing over the years.

There was no clarity from CSK whether he will play, even though it was told that he will do the customary fan events that he does every year at the end of CSK's home campaign.

Even though Dhoni has been missed in the middle through the season due to his calf injury, his experience has been invaluable for the team. During an event prior to the practice session Sunday, Dhoni spoke about his suggestions to captain Ruturaj Gaikwad.

"What I told Rutu was to run CSK the way he wanted to run it. That's how I have run CSK for a very long time. And I always felt it's a game where the captain has to make the decisions. Yes, there are coaches and support stuff, but it's not like football where the manager decides. In cricket, it's about the captain and he has to decide," Dhoni said.

THINK TANK: Ruturaj Gaikwad and MS Dhoni

The legend said that there can be things that Ruturaj can pick up from him, but he essentially needs to be his own man. "Yes, there will be certain things that he will pick from the way I used to lead. But individuals are different...Whatever you feel is your style, you have the full liberty over here to decide," Dhoni said.

The 44-year-old explained how he advised his protege that he would be open to give advice. "I'm very open, I'll come and talk to you, but you don't have to do even one thing that I speak to you about. Let's say I come up with ten pieces of advice, if you don't follow even one, that is fair enough. When you are the leader, you have to take that responsibility. As a leader, you see the resources that you have and how you want to use it," Dhoni added.

The former skipper, who guided the team to five titles, said he always insisted on the "cricket first" approach that led to the team's success. "We are someone who believes in concentrating more on cricket. Yes, we have had to do a lot of other things that are surrounding cricket, but as a franchisee, we know that our essence is cricket and we should stick to that," he said at the event organized by Etihad, one of the team sponsors.

Dhoni's amazing fan connect also came up for discussion and the Jharkhand man explained how he didn't make an extra effort to ensure it.

"In my case, I never wanted to woo fans or have more followers. I just wanted to be authentic. Once you are authentic, people start loving you and they start picking up stuff that they love about you," Dhoni said. He added that the consistency of the team went a long way in the success of the team. "We have been consistent and that's why the fans have probably been brilliant over the years. The support of the fans matters, when the chips are down, you can get that extra 10-15% from the crowd," Dhoni explained the Chepauk magic that helped CSK become the force they are.

SNAP SHOTS

B'desh on top

Opener Mahmudul Hasan Joy struck a fluent half-century after the bowlers dominated to put Bangladesh firmly in command of the second Test against Pakistan on Sunday. Bangladesh closed day two on 110-3 in their second innings, leading by 156 runs in Sylhet. **Brief scores: Bangladesh: 278** & **110/3 in 26.4 overs** (Mahmudul Joy 52; Khurram Shahzad 2-19) vs **Pakistan (o/n :21/0) 232 in 57.4 overs** (Babar Azam 68, Sajid Khan 38; Nahid Rana 3-60, Taijul Islam 3-67).

Pragg draws: Indian GM R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Vincent Keymer to stay in joint lead after the third round of the Super Chess Classic, part of the Grand chess tour.

Karman to face Harmony in opener: India's Karman Thandi, who has used her injury-protected ranking of 238, to make the qualifying competition of the French Open, starting Monday, takes on France's Harmony Tan, ranked 220, in the first round. Thandi, 27, ranked 1468, has been out of the sport for the last couple of years, and played two WTT events in April in Japan this year.

Avani struggles: India's Avani Prashanth endured a difficult third round, carding an 81 to slip down the leaderboard at the 2026 Amundi German Masters on the Ladies European Tour. Avani carded a 81, dropping well down the standings at 9-over-par after 54 holes.

Diamond Harbour qualify for ISL: Diamond Harbour FC on Sunday clinched the Indian Football League title on their debut season after playing out a 1-1 draw against Dempo SC in Margao to gain promotion to the top-tier Indian Super League.

India U-18 hockey teams lose: The Indian U-18 men's and women's hockey teams suffered defeats against Australia in their second match of the series at the SAI Centre Bhopal on Sunday. The men's team lost 1-3 while the women's side fell to a 1-4 defeat to the visitors.

Chelsea appoint Alonso: Chelsea have appointed Xabi Alonso as their new manager on a four-year contract starting in July, the Premier League club said on Sunday as they tasked the Spaniard with reviving their fortunes after a turbulent and trophy-less season.

Smith's long road back from the edge

infobox tag with 11 point dummy text.

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Syed Asif

TENACIOUS: Keegan Smith

Bengaluru: Keegan Smith was bathed in the afterglow of victory on Saturday evening, having lifted the Karnataka Open ATP Challenger Trophy at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium. The applause, post-match photo ops and adulation marked a moment of fulfilment for the 27-year-old American. But beneath the victory lies a story of pain, resilience and survival.

During his college days in the US, Smith's promising journey had been interrupted by a horrific skateboarding accident that pushed him close to death. In no time, his world had an air of uncertainty. Rushed to the hospital, the 6' 7" player, who spent eight days in an intensive care unit, found himself in a serious battle, not for points and titles, but for life.

The crash left him with a temporal bone fracture and haematoma, severely affecting blood flow to his brain. The situation was quite scary and he was given blood thinners, but then there was some bleeding from the other side of his head. "That's when it got really serious and I almost had to get surgery. I was in a lot of pain," Smith recalled. "There was a moment in the hospital where I seriously felt like I was going to die."

As a result he had horrible headaches and struggled to even get out of bed. Yet, somehow, Smith emerged from the darkness with doctors describing his recovery to be miraculous. "I had more life to live and my story wasn't done yet. I was lucky to make a really healthy recovery," said the 289-ranked Smith. "I had some really bad depression. But tennis has always been my anchor and it's a healthy vehicle to express myself and it's so good for the brain. I couldn't think of my life without tennis."

In fact, just a few months post-accident, he captured an ITF M15 title, a testament to both his grit and unyielding spirit, which was on display in the recently concluded Challenger event as well.

However, the battle has not entirely faded. The pain lingers quietly even in his everyday life while travelling around the world. "I still have daily headaches (even during competitions), but I've just learned to live through it," said Smith, who has a history of injuries, including a broken arm and nose in separate accidents. "This is some of the best tennis I've ever played in my life. I'm just very happy for myself," said Smith.

Smith will now aim for a double as the American, having moved up by 46 places to 243 in the new rankings, will be top seeded in the SM Krishna Sasikumar (524) will meet eighth seed Maximus Jones of Thailand. Digvijaypratap Singh faces Japan's Leo Vithoontien. Local hope Kriish Tyagi, who reached the semifinals last week here, will be keen to deliver once again.

KARAN LEADS INDIAN CHARGE

Karan Singh, who is the seventh seed, will lead India's charge in the SM Krishna Memorial Open. Ranked World No 413, he faces Malaysia's Mitsuki Wei Leong in the opening round on Monday while Mukund

Sinner eases to Italian Open title

Reuters

CHAMPAGNE MOMENT: Sinner celebrates (left) with Rudd

Jannik Sinner won the Italian Open on Sunday after beating Casper Ruud 6-4, 6-4 to claim a record-extending sixth consecutive Masters 1000 tournament victory. World number one Sinner has now completed the 'Golden Masters' by winning all of the ATP's top-ranked events after becoming the first Italian champion at the Foro Italico since Adriano Panatta 50 years ago.

Only Novak Djokovic had previously won all nine Masters 1000 events before Sunday, but there was little doubt

TENNIS

about Sinner triumphing over the last 10 days. Sinner heads into Roland Garros, which starts next weekend, on a 29-match winning streak after beating Ruud for a fifth time in as many meetings.

And his run of match wins is even longer, 34, in Masters 1000 tournaments, another record he has established in a season in which he has dominated the men's tour. Sinner can complete his collection of Grand Slams at Roland Garros and with his great rival Carlos Alcaraz out of action few would bet against him securing a first title on Paris clay.

Norwegian Ruud had never won a set against Sinner in any of their previous four meetings, but immediately improved on the fearful hammering he received here from the Italian last year by winning the first two games.

But Sinner broke straight back and took the lead in the match after an opening set in which world number 25 held his own against a player he'd previous said "cannot lose". Sinner then broke Ruud again at the start of the second set and from there it was just a matter of time before he won the championship.

SVITOLINA TRIUMPHS

Ukraine's Elina Svitolina signalled her French Open ambitions by battling past world number four Coco Gauff 6-4, 6-7(3), 6-2 in the Italian Open final on Saturday to lift her first claycourt title of the season ahead of Roland Garros. AGENCIES

Satwik-Chirag lose in Thailand final

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The wait for the elusive title continues for Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty. Their last title for the former world No.1 pair came at the same venue in 2024, but they failed to repeat the magic on

BADMINTON

Sunday. The top Indian doubles pair saved four championship points before losing to Leo Rolly Carnando and Daniel Marthin of Indonesia 12-21, 23-25 in the Thailand Open BWF Super-500 tournament in Bangkok. Despite not winning the title, the Indian duo has been quite consistent on the tour, reaching several finals, clinching a bronze at the World Championships and the recently concluded Thomas Cup. Satwik said he was happy with their performance despite the loss. "Except for today, I am happy with the way we played this week. It is more mental than physical now ... Things have started working for us and hopefully we will soon be on the winning side," he said, adding that they could have been a bit sharper earlier.

Jennifer Paes passes away

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Former India basketball captain and Olympian Jennifer Paes passed away on Sunday due to prolonged illness. She was 72. Born Jennifer Dutton, she was the mother of former tennis star Leander Paes. Jennifer represented India in basketball at the 1972 Summer Olympics and later captained the national team, emerging as one of the pioneering figures in Indian women's basketball.

Her husband Dr Vece Paes, a member of the Indian hockey team that won bronze at the Munich Olympics, passed away last year.

Fernandes equals league assist record

Manchester: Manchester United secured a 3-2 Premier League victory over Nottingham Forest in their final home game of a resurgent season on Sunday, with the club on the cusp of confirming Michael Carrick as their permanent manager.

Luke Shaw, Matheus Cunha and Bryan Mbeumo

FOOTBALL

scored, while captain Bruno Fernandes equalled the league record for assists in a season with his 20th, as United stayed third on 68 points with one game remaining after Carrick's eighth win in nine games at Old Trafford. Forest sit 16th on 43 points.

Defender Shaw opened the scoring in the fifth minute after a loose clearance fell kindly, drilling his finish into the bottom corner for his first league goal in more than three years. Morato levelled with his first goal for Forest in the 53rd minute, heading home from close range.

AP

ALL SMILES: Bruno Fernandes with his daughter Matilde

Cunha restored United's lead two minutes later with an effort that stood following a lengthy VAR check for a possible Mbeumo handball in the build-up. Mbeumo finally found the back of the net in the 76th minute with a composed finish from Fernandes' cross, but Morgan Gibbs-White pulled one back soon after to ensure a nervy finale. Fernandes equalled the assist record shared by Thierry Henry and Kevin De Bruyne.

NAPOLI SEAL CL SPOT

A 3-0 win over Pisa secured second-placed Napoli a place in the Champions League on Sunday, while Juventus suffered a shock 2-0 home loss to 10-man Fiorentina to drop from third to sixth in the Serie A standings. AC Milan moved up to third with a 2-1 win over Genoa.

Results: EPL: Manchester United 3 (Shaw 5, Cunha 55, Mbeumo 76) bt Nottingham Forest 2 (Morato 53, Gibbs-White 78); Brentford 2 (Ouattara 40, 88) drew with Crystal Palace 2 (Sarr 6-pen, Wharton 52); Everton 1 (Rohl 43) lost to Sunderland 3 (Brobbey 59, Le Fee 81, Isidor 90+1); Leeds 1 (Calvert-Lewin 90+6) bt Brighton 0; Wolves 1 (Mane 25) drew with Fulham 1 (Robinson 45+3-pen). **Italian league:** Como 1 (Moreno 58) bt Parma 0; Genoa 1 (Vasquez 87) lost to AC Milan 2 (Nkunku 50-pen, Athekame 82); Inter Milan 1 (Bonny 47) drew with Verona 1 (Bowie 90+1); Juventus 0 lost to Fiorentina 2 (Ndour 34, Mandragora 83); Pisa 0 lost to Napoli 3 (McTominay 21, Rrahmani 27, Hojlund 90+2); Roma 2 (Mancini 40, 66) bt Lazio 0. AGENCIES

Iron Mirage triumphs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Prasanna Kumar-trained Iron Mirage, ridden by Akshay Kumar, won the War Hammer Million, the main event run over a distance of 1400 metres a the summer races here on Sunday.

1. The Newmarket Plate – 1200M: Breeze Bluster 1, Embosom 2, Sling Shot 3, Double Scotch 4, Not Run: Days Date. 4l, Ns, 3/4l. T: 1:15.80. Tote: Rs 29 (W). 13, 23, 29 (P). Fc: Rs 347. Q: Rs 171. Shp: Rs 61. Thp: Rs 71. Trinalla: Rs 3245 & 1217. Exacta: Rs 21530 & 3690.

2. The Sweet Memories Plate – 1400M: Knotty Cruise 1, Turf Paradise 2, Absolute Katrina 3, Absolute Thunder 4, 2-1/4l, 3l, 3/4l. T: 1:25.79. Tote: Rs 26 (W). 12, 32, 51 (P). Fc: Rs 471. Q; Rs 272. Shp: Rs 167. Thp: Rs 138. Trinalla: Rs 5722 & 2452. Exacta: Rs 47902 & 20529. **3. The Aihole Plate – 1200M:** Regal Reality 1, Stellantis 2, Royal Deccan 3, Monterio 4, 3-1/2l, 1-1/4l, 3-1/2l. T: 1:12.26. Tote: Rs 13 (W). 10, 14 (P). Fc: Rs 24. Q: Rs 22. Shp: Rs 19. Thp: Rs 27. Trinalla: Rs 33 & 24. Exacta: Rs 58 & 31.

4. The War Hammer Million – 1400M: Iron Mirage 1, Moonveil 2, Deep Respect 3, Monstera 4, 2-1/2l, 6-1/4l, 1l. T: 1:24.25. Tote: Rs 17 (W). 12, 10 (P). Fc: Rs 27. Q: Rs 23. Shp: Rs 19. Thp: Rs 24. Trinalla: Rs 36 & 16. Exacta: Rs 63 & 43.

5. The Track Lightning Plate – 1400M: Starzella 1, Legacy Field 2, Cantarina 3, Exotic Black 4. 6l, 2-1/2l, 3l. T: 1: 24.70. Tote: Rs 16 (W). 10, 13, 10 (P). Fc: Rs 36. Q: Rs 23. Shp: Rs 28. Thp: Rs 32. Trinalla: Rs 59 & 41. Exacta: Rs 222 & 190.

6. The Racing Patrons Plate – 1400M: Elysium 1, Hazel 2, Silicon Star 3, Forseti 4, 6l, 1-1/2l, 1-1/2l. T: 1:24.89. Tote: Rs 16 (W). 12, 11, 11 (P). Fc: Rs 41. Q: Rs 32. Shp: Rs 30. Thp: Rs 34. Trinalla: Rs 66 & 25. Exacta: Rs 491 & 249. **Jackpot:** Rs 319. **Runner-up:** Rs 78. **Mini Jackpot:** Rs 166. **First Treble:** Rs 106. **Second Treble:** Rs 111.

Skipper Samarth, Neev power SUCC (1)

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Swastic Union Cricket Club (1) rode on captain **Samarth Suresh**'s blistering century and Neev Bhattacharjee's four-wicket haul to register a commanding 158-run victory over Vijaya Cricket Club, Malur, in

KSCA INTER-CLUB

the KSCA U-16 inter-club tournament here recently.

Opting to bat, Swastic Union got off to a brilliant start with Samarth leading from the front. The opener smashed a quickfire 119 off 107 balls, studded with 13 boundaries and two maximums. He

stitched together partnerships of 119 and 139 runs with Nitish Arya and Saachin Suresh for the opening and second wickets, respectively. Nitish scored 76, while Saachin added 49 to lay a solid foundation. Swastic Union posted an imposing 361/6 in 50 overs.

In reply, Vijaya CC struggled to keep pace with the steep target. The lack of partnerships added to their troubles as wickets fell regularly. Vijaya CC were eventually bowled out for 203 in 36.4 overs, handing Swastic Union a commanding victory. Abhaychandra Kallapura's fighting 85 was the lone bright spark. Neev (4/44) was ably supported by Vidhat S, and Diganth R, who accounted for two wickets apiece.

Brief scores: Swastic Union CC (1): 361/6 in 50 overs (Samarth Suresh 119 (107b; 13x4; 2x6), Nitish Arya 76, Saachin Araganji 49, Aadyot Pandey 39, Dakshith Narayan 27 n.o; Reyansh Sharath 2-72) bt **Vijaya CC, Malur: 203 all out in 36.4 overs** (Abhaychandra Kallapura 85; Vidlsat S 2-42. Neev Bhattacharjee 4-44, Diganth R 2-28).

Modern CC: 190 all out in 46.5 overs (Aarin Sen 57; Vardhan Jayaram 4-32, Sai Shishir 2-20) bt **Young Cricketers (1): 176 all out in 43.4 overs** (Avankumar Nirmal 31, Praveen T 38; Lukesh D 4-24, Suriyha M 2-34, Aarin Sen 2-26, Suraj Ajay Kumar 2-6).

City Cricketers (2): 105 all out in 28.3 overs (Rahul Jena 2-23, Vignesh Subhramaniyan 3-10) lost to **Young Lions Club: 108 for no loss in 12.3 overs** (Deekshith Gowda 38 n.o, Shivaraj R 66 n.o).

Whirlwind Cricketers: 322/7 in 50 overs (Vikyath Gowda 58, Shubhan Hiremath 121 (124b; 13x4), Sidharth Nayaka 45; Darpan Gowda 2-36, Samarth Srikantha 3-53) bt **Friends Union CC (2): 177 all out in 33.2 overs** (Nabhanyu 32, Dishant Anilkumar 83; Sidharth Nayaka 2-34, Pratham Nayak 2-40, Saket Chandramouli 3-28).

Saroz does the trick

Bengaluru: Saroz netted a hat-trick to power Samurai Bangalore FA to a 6-0 win over Undisputed FC in the KSFA 'C' Division league football championship.

Results: S2: Gp A: FC White Field United 3 (Manav 16, 50, Kibent 45) bt La Esperanza 0; Football Aura 1 (Lohith B 35) bt PKR FC 0; Blue Star FC 2 (Yogesh VR 42, Yashwanth S Kotan K 48) bt Silican FC 1 (Roshan R 26-pen). **Gp B:** Samurai Bangalore FA 6 (Saroz 3, 20, 30, Karthik JB 7-og, Advay Jhawar 32, Ajay Rajan 50) bt Undisputed FC 0; Universal Blues FC 11 (Abhijeth KA 4, 12, 23, 29, 38, 41, 50, Sarun VS 15, 44, Alphin K Wilson 24, Afsal VS 60) bt Velocita FC 0; Blues FA 1 (Abhishek K 44) bt Kodagu Colts FC 0. TNN

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